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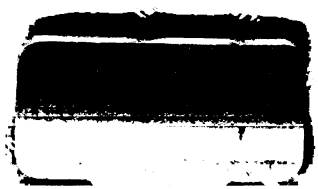

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Lois T. C. Howiston,
Oct^r 18^th 70.

THE TRAGEDIES OF

ÆSCHYLOS

A NEW TRANSLATION, WITH A BIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY, AND
AN APPENDIX OF RHYMED CHORAL ODES

BY E. H. PLUMPTRE, M.A.

VOLUME II.

STRAHAN & CO., PUBLISHERS
56 LUDGATE HILL, LONDON
1868.

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EDINBURGH:
PRINTED BY BALLANTYNE AND COMPANY,
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THE TRAGEDIES OF

ÆSCHYLOS

IN TWO VOLUMES

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THE PERSIANS.

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ARGUMENT.

When Xerxes came to the throne of Persia, remembering how his father Dareios had sought to subdue the land of the Hellenes, and seeking to avenge the defeat of Datis and Artaphernes on the field of Marathon, he gathered together a mighty host of all nations under his dominion, and led them against Hellas. And at first he prospered and prevailed, crossed the Hellespont, and defeated the Spartans at Thermopylæ, and took the city of Athens, from which the greater part of its citizens had fled. But at last he and his armament met with utter overthrow at Salamis. Meanwhile Atossa, the mother of Xerxes, with her handmaids and the elders of the Persians, waited anxiously at Susa, where was the palace of the great king, for tidings of her son.

Note.—Within two years after the battle of Salamis, the feeling of national exultation was met by Phrynichos in a tragedy bearing the title of *the Phœnikians*, and having for its subject the defeat of Xerxes. As he had come under the displeasure of the Athenian *demos* for having brought on the stage the sufferings of their Ionian kinsmen in his *Capture of Miletos*, he was apparently anxious to regain his popularity by a 'sensation' drama of another kind; and his success seems to have prompted Æschylos to a like attempt five years later, B.C. 473. The Tetralogy to which the play belonged, and which gained the first prize on its representation, included the two tragedies (unconnected in subject) of *Phineus* and *Glaucos*, and the satyric drama of *Prometheus the Firestealer*.

The play has, therefore, the interest of being strictly a contemporary narrative of the battle of Salamis and its immediate consequences, by one who may himself have been present at it, and whose brother Ameinias (Herod. viii. 93) had distinguished himself in it by a special act of heroism. As such, making all allowance for the influence of dramatic exigencies, and the tendency to colour history so as to meet the tastes of patriotic Athenians, it may claim, where it differs from the story told by Herodotos, to be a more trustworthy record. And it has, we must remember, the interest of being the only extant drama of its class, the only tragedy the subject of which is not taken from the cycle of heroic myths, but from the national history of the time. Far below the Oresteian Trilogy, as it may seem to us, as a work of art, having more the character of a spectacle than a poem, it was, we may well believe, unusually successful at the time, and it is said to have been chosen by Hiero for reproduction at Syracuse after Æschylos had settled there under his patronage.

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Dramatis Personæ

ATOSSA.

Messenger.

Ghost of DAREIOS.

XERXES.

Chorus of Persian Elders.

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THE PERSIANS.

SCENE.—Susa, *in front of the palace of Xerxes, the Tomb of Dareios occupying the position of the thymele.*

Enter Chorus of Persian Elders.

We the title bear of Faithful,[1]
Friends of Persians gone to Hellas,
Watchers left of treasure city[2]
Gold-abounding, whom, as oldest,
Xerxes hath himself appointed,
He, the offspring of Dareios,
As the warders of his country.
And about our king's returning,
And our army's, gold-abounding,
Over-much, with evil boding,
Does my mind within me shudder,
(For our whole strength born of Asia

[1] "The Faithful," or "trusty," seems to have been a special title of honour given to the veteran councillors of the king, (Xenoph. *Anab.* i. 15,) just as that of the "Immortals" was chosen for his body-guard, (Herod. vii. 83.)

[2] Susa was pre-eminently the treasury of the Persian kings (Herod. v. 49; Strabo. xv. p. 731), their favourite residence in spring, as Ecbatana in Media was in summer and Babylon in winter.

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Is gone,) and for our youthful ruler
Sorely frets: nor courier cometh,
Nor any horseman, bringing tidings
To the city of the Persians.
From Ecbatana departing,
Or Susa, or the Kissian fortress,[1]
Forth they sped upon their journey,
Some in ships, and some on horses,
Some on foot, still onward marching,
In their close array presenting
Squadrons duly armed for battle:
Then Amistres, Artaphernes,
Megabazes, and Astaspes,
Mighty leaders of the Persians,
Kings, and of the great King servants,[2]
March, the chiefs of mighty army.
Archers they and mounted horsemen,
Dread to look on, fierce in battle,
Artembares, horse-controller,
And Masistres, and Imæos,
Archer famed, and Pharandakes,
And the charioteer Sosthanes;

[1] Kissia was properly the name of the district in which Susa stood; but here, and in v. 123, it is treated as if it belonged to a separate city. Throughout the play there is, indeed, a lavish use of Persian barbaric names of persons and places, without a very minute regard to historical accuracy.

[2] Here, as in Herodotos and Greek writers generally, the title, "the King," or "the great King," was enough. It could be understood only of the Persian. The latter name had been borne by the kings of Assyria. (2 Kings xviii. 28.) A little later it passed into the fuller, more boastful form of "the King of kings."

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Neilos mighty and prolific
Sent forth others, Susiskanes,
Pegastagon, born in Egypt,
And the chief of sacred Memphis;
Great Arsames, Ariomardos,
Ruler of primeval Thebæ,
And the marshmen,[1] and the rowers,
Dread and in their number countless.
And their fellow crowds of Lydians,
Very delicate and stately,[2]
Who the people of the mainlands
Rule throughout,—whom Mitragathes
And brave Arkteus, kingly chieftains,
And Sardis, gold-abounding, send forth,
Riding on their many chariots,
Three or four a-breast their horses,
Sight to look upon all dreadful!
And the men of sacred Tmolos[3]
Rush to place the yoke of bondage

[1] The inhabitants of the Delta of the Nile, especially those of the marshy districts near the Heracleotic mouth, were famed as supplying the best and bravest soldiers of any part of Egypt.—Comp. Thucyd. i. 110.

[2] The epithet was applied probably by Æschylos to the Lydians properly so called, the barbaric race with whom the Hellenes had little or nothing in common. They in dress, diet, mode of life, their distaste for the contents of the arena, seemed to the Greeks the very type of effeminacy. The Ionian Greeks, however, were brought under the same influence, and gradually acquired the same character. The suppression of the name of the Ionians in the list of the Persian forces, may be noticed as characteristic. The Athenian poet would not bring before an Athenian audience the shame of their Asiatic kinsmen.

[3] Tmolos, sacred as being the mythical birth-place of Dionysos.

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On the neck of conquered Hellas.
Mardon, Tharybis, spear-anvils,[1]
And the Mysians, javelin-darting,[2]
Babylôn too, gold-abounding,
Sends a mingled crowd, swept onward,
Both the troops who man the vessels,
And the skilled and trustful archers;
And the race the sword that beareth,
Follows from each clime of Asia,
At the great King's dread commandment.
These, the bloom of Persia's greatness,
Now are gone forth to the battle;
And for these, their mother country,
Asia, mourns with mighty yearning;
Wives and mothers faint with trembling
Through the hours that slowly linger,
Counting each day as it passes.

STROPH. I.

The king's great host, destroying cities mighty,
Hath to the land beyond the sea passed over,
Crossing the straits of Athamantid Helle,[3]
On raft by ropes secured,

1 "Spear-anvils," *sc.*, meeting the spear of their foes as the anvils would meet it, turning its point, themselves steadfast and immovable.

2 So Herodotos (vii. 74) in his account of the army of Xerxes describes the Mysians as using for their weapons those darts or "javelins" made by hardening the ends in the fire.

3 Helle the daughter of Athamas, from whom the Hellespont took its name. For the description of the pontoons formed by boats, which were moored together with cables and finally covered with faggots, comp. Herod. vii. 36.

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And thrown his path, compact of many a vessel,
As yoke upon the neck of mighty ocean.

ANTISTROPH. I.

Of populous Asia thus the mighty ruler
'Gainst all the land his sacred host directeth
In two divisions, land and naval forces,
Trusting the chieftains stern,
The men who drive the host to fight, relentless,—
He, sprung from gold-born race, a hero godlike,[1]

STROPH. II.

And glancing with darkling look, and eyes as of ravening dragon,
With many a hand, and many a ship, and driving his Syrian chariot,[2]
He brings upon spearmen renowned the battle of conquering arrows.[3]

ANTISTROPH. II.

Nor is there one so tried as, withstanding the great flood of warriors,

1 "Gold-born," *sc.*, descended from Perseus, the child of Danaë.

2 Syrian, either in the vague sense in which it became almost synonymous with Assyrian, or else showing that Syria, properly so called, retained the fame for chariots which it had had at a period as early as the time of the Hebrew Judges, (Judg. v. 3.) Herodotos (vii. 140) gives an Oracle of Delphi in which the same epithet appears.

3 The description, though put into the mouth of Persians, is meant to flatter Hellenic pride. The Persians and their army were for the most part light-armed troops only, barbarians equipped with javelins or bows. In the sculptures of Persepolis, as in those of Nineveh and Khorsabad, this mode of warfare is throughout the most conspicuous. They, the Hellenes, were the *hoplites*, warriors of the spear and the shield, the cuirass and the greaves.

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To keep within stedfast bounds that wave of ocean resistless;
Hard to fight is the host of the Persians, the people stout-hearted.

MESODE.

Yet ah! what mortal can ward the craft of the Gods all-deceiving?
* Who with a nimble foot of one leap is easily sovereign?
For Atè, fawning and kind, at first a mortal betraying,
Then in snares and meshes decoys him,
Whence one who is but man in vain doth struggle to 'scape from.

STROPH. III.

For Fate of old, by the high Gods' decree,
Prevailed, and on the Persians brought this task,
Wars with the crash of towers,
And set the surge of horsemen in array,
And the fierce sack that lays a city low.

ANTISTROPH. III.

But now they learnt to look on ocean plains,[1]
The wide sea hoary with the violent blast,
Waxing o'er confident
In cables formed of many a slender strand,
And rare device of transport for the host.

[1] A touch of Athenian exultation in their life as seamen. To them the sea was almost a home. They were familiar with it from childhood. To the Persians it was new and untried. They had a new lesson to learn, late in the history of the nation, late in the lives of individual soldiers.

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STROPH. IV.

So doth my toiling soul,
As clad in mourning, mutter in its fear,
Ah me! ah me! for all the Persian host!
Lest soon our country learn
That Susa's spacious fort is void of men.

ANTISTROPH. IV.

And through the Kissians' town
Shall echo heavy thud of hands on breast.
Woe! woe! when all the crowd of women speak
This utterance of great grief,
And byssine robes are rent in agony.

STROPH. V.

For all the horsemen strong,
And host that march on foot,
Like swarm of bees, have gone with him who led
The vanguard of the host,
Crossing the sea-washed, bridge-built promontory
That joins the shores of either continent.[1]

ANTISTROPH. V.

And beds with tears are wet
In grief for husbands gone,
And Persian wives are lavish in their grief,
Each yearning for her lord;
And each who sent her warrior-spouse to battle
Now mourns at home in dreary solitude.

[1] The bridge of boats, with the embankment raised upon it, is thought of as a new headland putting out from the one shore and reaching to the other.

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But come, ye Persians now,
And sitting in this ancient hall of ours,
Let us take thought deep-counselling and wise,
(Sore need is there of that,)
How fareth now the great king Xerxes, he
Who calls Dareios sire,
Bearing the name our fathers bore of old?
Is it the archer's bow that wins the day?
Or does the strength prevail
Of iron point that heads the spear's strong shaft?
But lo! in glory like the face of gods,
The mother of my king, my queen, appears,
Let us do reverent homage at her feet;
Yea, it is meet that all
Should speak to her with words of salutation.

Enter ATOSSA *in a chariot of state.*

O sovereign queen of Persian wives deep-zoned,
Mother of Xerxes, old and venerable,
Wife of Dareios! hail!
'Twas thine to join in wedlock with a spouse
Whom Persians owned as God,[1]
And of a God thou art the mother too,
Unless its ancient Fortune fails our host.

[1] Stress is laid by the Hellenic poet, as in the *Agamemnon*, (v. 895,) and in v. 707 of this Play, on the tendency of the East to give to its kings the names and the signs of homage which were due only to the Gods. The Hellenes might deify a dead hero, but not a living sovereign. On different grounds the Jews shrank, as in the stories of Nebuchadnezzar and Dareios, (Dan. iii. 6,) from all such acts.

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Atoss. Yes, thus I come, our gold-decked palace leaving,
The bridal bower Dareios with me slept in.
Care gnaws my heart, but now I tell you plainly
A tale, my friends, which may not leave me fearless,
Lest boastful wealth should stumble at the threshold,
And with his foot o'erturn the prosperous fortune
That great Dareios raised with Heaven's high blessing.
And twofold care untold my bosom haunteth:
We may not honour wealth that has no warriors,
Nor on the poor shines light to strength proportioned;
Wealth without stint we have, yet for our eye we tremble;
For as the eye of home I deem a master's presence.
Wherefore, ye Persians, aid me now in counsel;
Trusty and old, in you lies hope of wisdom.

Chor. Queen of our land! be sure thou need'st not utter
Or thing or word twice o'er, which power may point to;
Thou bid'st us counsel give who now are willing.

Atoss. Ever with many visions of the night[1]
Am I encompassed, since my son went forth,
Leading a mighty host, with aim to sack
The land of the Ionians. But ne'er yet
Have I beheld a dream so manifest

[1] In the Greek, as in the translation, there is a change of metre, intended apparently to represent the transition from the tone of eager excitement to the ordinary level of discourse.

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As in the night just past. And this I'll tell thee:
There stood by me two women in fair robes;
And this in Persian garments was arrayed,
And that in Dorian came before mine eyes;
In stature both of tallest, comeliest size;
And both of faultless beauty, sisters twain
Of the same stock.[1] And they twain had their homes,
One in the Hellenic, one in alien land.
And these two, as I dreamt I saw, were set
At variance with each other. And my son
Learnt it, and checked and mollified their wrath,
And yokes them to his chariots, and his collar
He places on their necks. And one was proud
Of that equipment,[2] and in harness gave
Her mouth obedient, but the other kicked,
And tears the chariot's trappings with her hands,
And rushes off uncurbed, and breaks its yoke
Asunder. And my son falls low, and then
His father comes, Dareios, pitying him.
And lo! when Xerxes sees him, he his clothes
Rends round his limbs. These things I say I saw
In visions of the night; and when I rose,

[1] With reference either to the *mythos* that Asia and Europe were both daughters of Okeanos, or to the historical fact that the Asiatic Ionians and the Dorians of Europe were both of the same Hellenic stock. The contrast between the long flowing robes of the Asiatic women, and the short, scanty kilt-like dress of those of Sparta must be borne in mind if we would see the picture in its completeness.

[2] Athenian pride is flattered with the thought that they had resisted while the Ionian Greeks had submitted all too willingly to the yoke of the Barbarian.

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And dipped my hands in fountain flowing clear,[1]
I at the altar stood with hand that bore
Sweet incense, wishing holy chrism to pour
To the averting Gods whom thus men worship.
And I beheld an eagle in full flight
To Phœbos' altar-hearth; and then, my friends,
I stood, struck dumb with fear; and next I saw
A kite pursuing, in her wingèd course,
And with his claws tearing the eagle's head,
Which did nought else but crouch and yield itself.
Such terrors it has been my lot to see,
And yours to hear: For be ye sure, my son,
If he succeed, will wonder-worthy prove;
But if he fail, still irresponsible
He to the people, and in either case,
He, should he but return, is sovereign still.[2]

Chor. We neither wish, O Lady, thee to frighten
O'ermuch with what we say, nor yet encourage:
But thou, the Gods adoring with entreaties,
If thou hast seen aught ill, bid them avert it,
And that all good things may receive fulfilment
For thee, thy children, and thy friends and country.
And next 'tis meet libations due to offer

[1] Lustrations of this kind, besides their general significance in cleansing from defilement, had a special force as charms to turn aside dangers threatened by foreboding dreams.—Comp. Aristoph. *Frogs*, v. 1264; Persius, *Sat.* ii. 16.

[2] The political bearing of the passage as contrasting this characteristic of the despotism of Persia with the strict account to which all Athenian generals were subject, is, of course, unmistakable.

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To Earth and to the dead. And ask thy husband,
Dareios, whom thou say'st by night thou sawest,
With kindly mood from 'neath the Earth to send thee
Good things to light for thee and for thine offspring,
While adverse things shall fade away in darkness.
Such things do I, a self-taught seer, advise thee
In kindly mood, and any way we reckon
That good will come to thee from out these omens.

Atoss. Well, with kind heart, as first expounder, thou
Of these my dreams hast brought out welcome meaning
For me, and for my sons; and thy good news,
May it receive fulfilment! And this too,
As thou dost bid, we to the Gods will offer,
And to our friends below, when we go homeward.
But first, my friends, I wish to hear of Athens,
Where in the world do men report it standeth?[1]

Chor. Far to the West, where sets our king the Sun-God.

Atoss. Was it this city my son wished to capture?

Chor. Aye, then would Hellas to our king be subject.

Atoss. And have they any multitude of soldiers?

Chor. A mighty host, that wrought the Medes much mischief.

Atoss. And what besides? Have they too wealth sufficing?

[1] The question, which seems to have rankled in the minds of the Athenians, is recorded as an historical fact, and put into the mouth of Dareios by Herodotos, (v. 101.) He had asked it on hearing that Sardis had been attacked and burnt by them.

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Chor. A fount of silver have they, their soil's treasure.[1]

Atoss. Have they a host in archers' skill excelling?

Chor. Not so, they wield the pike and shield and bucklers.[2]

Atoss. What shepherd rules and lords it o'er their people?

Chor. They are not slaves of any man, nor subjects.

Atoss. How then can they sustain a foe invading?

Chor. So that they spoiled Dareios' goodly army.

Atoss. Dread news is thine for sires of those who 're marching.

Chor. Nay, but I think thou soon wilt know the whole truth;

This running one may know is that of Persian:[3]
'Tis clear he brings some good or evil tidings.

Enter Messenger.

Mess. O cities of the whole wide land of Asia!
O soil of Persia, haven of great wealth!
How at one stroke is brought to nothingness
Our great prosperity, and all the flower

[1] The words point to the silver mines at Laureion, which had been worked under Peisistratos, and of which this is the first mention in Greek literature.

[2] Once more the contrast between the Greek *hoplite* and the light-armed archers of the invaders, is dwelt upon. The next answer of the Chorus dwells upon the deeper contrast, then prominent in the minds of all Athenians, between their democratic freedom and the despotism of Persia.

[3] The system of postal communications by means of couriers which Dareios had organised had made their speed in running proverbial, (Herod. viii. 97.)

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Of Persia's strength is fallen! Woe is me!
'Tis ill to be the first to bring ill news;
Yet needs must I the whole woe tell, ye Persians;
All our barbaric mighty host is lost.[1]

STROPH. I.

Chor. O piteous, piteous woe!
O strange and dread event!
Weep, O ye Persians, hearing this great grief!
Mess. Yea, all things there are ruined utterly;
And I myself beyond all hope behold
The light of day at home.

ANTISTROPH. I.

Chor. Long, long doth life appear
To me, bowed down with years,
On hearing this unlooked-for misery.
Mess. And I, indeed, being present and not hearing
The tales of others, can report, ye Persians,
What ills were brought to pass.

STROPH. II.

Chor. Alas, alas! in vain
The many-weaponed and commingled host
Went from the land of Asia to invade
The soil divine of Hellas.
Mess. Full of the dead, slain foully, are the coasts
Of Salamis, and all the neighbouring shore.

[1] With the characteristic contempt of a Greek for other races, Æschylos makes the Persians speak of themselves throughout as 'barbarians,' 'barbaric.'

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ANTISTROPH. II.

Chor. Alas, alas! sea-tossed
The bodies of our friends, and much disstained:
Thou say'st that they are drifted to and fro
* In far out-floating robes.[1]

Mess. E'en so; our bows availed not, but the host
Has perished, conquered by assault at sea.

STROPH. III.

Chor. Wail, raise a bitter cry
And full of woe, for those who died in fight.
How every way the Gods have wrought out ill,
Ah me! ah me! our army all destroyed!

Mess. O name of Salamis that most I loathe!
Ah how I groan, remembering Athens too!

ANTISTROPH. III.

Chor. Yea, to her enemies
Athens may well be hateful, and our minds
Remember how full many a Persian wife
She, for no cause, made widows and bereaved.

Atoss. Long time I have been silent in my woe,
Crushed down with grief; for this calamity
Exceeds all power to tell the woe, or ask.
Yet still we mortals needs must bear the grief
The Gods send on us. Clearly tell thy tale,
Unfolding the whole mischief, even though
Thou groan'st at evils, who there is not dead,
And which of our chief captains we must mourn,

[1] Perhaps, "On decks that floated on."

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And who, being set in office o'er the host,
Left by their death that office desolate.
Mess. Xerxes still lives and sees the light of day.
Atoss. To my house, then, great light thy words have brought,
Bright dawn of morning after murky night.
Mess. Artembares, the lord of myriad horse,
On the hard flinty coasts of the Sileni
Is now being dashed; and valiant Dadakes
Captain of thousands, smitten with the spear,
Leapt wildly from his ship. And Tenagon,
Best of the true old Bactrians, haunts the soil
Of Aias' isle; Lilaios, Arsames,
And with them too Argestes, there defeated,
Hard by the island where the doves abound,[1]
Beat here and there upon the rocky shore.
[And from the springs of Neilos, Ægypt's stream,
Arkteus, Adeues, Pheresseues too,
These with Pharnuchos in one ship were lost;]
Matallos, Chrysa-born, the captain bold
Of myriads, leader he of swarthy horse
Some thirty thousand strong, has fallen low,
His red beard, hanging all its shaggy length,
Deep dyed with blood, and purpled all his skin.
Arabian Magos, Bactrian Artames,

[1] Possibly Salamis itself, as famed for the doves which were reared there as sacred to Aphrodite, but possibly also one of the smaller islands in the Saronic gulf, which the epithet would be enough to designate for an Athenian audience.

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They perished, settlers in a land full rough.
[Amistris and Amphistreus, guiding well
The spear of many a conflict, and the noble
Ariomardos, giving cause of woe
At Sardis; and the Mysian Seisames.]
With seven score ships and ten came Tharybis;
Lyrnæan he in birth, once fair in form,
He lies, poor wretch, a death inglorious dying:
And, first in valour proved, Syennesis,
Kilikian Satrap, who, as one man, gave
Most trouble to his foes, and nobly died.
Of leaders such as these I mention make,
And out of many evils tell but few.

Atoss. Woe, woe! I hear the very worst of ills,
Shame to the Persians, cause of bitter wail;
But tell me, going o'er the ground again,
How great the number of the Hellenes' navy,
That they presumed with Persia's armament
To wage their warfare in the clash of ships.

Mess. As far as numbers went, be sure, the ships
Of Persia had the better, for the Hellenes
Had as their total ships but fifteen score,
And other ten selected as reserve.
And Xerxes (well I know it) had a thousand
Which he commanded—those that most excelled[1]

[1] As regards the number of the Persian ships, 1000 of average, and 207 of special swiftness, Æschylos agrees with Herodotos, who gives the total of 1207. The latter, however, reckons the Greek ships not at 310, but 378, (vii. 89.)

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In speed were twice five score and seven in number;
So stands the account. Deem'st thou our forces less
In that encounter? Nay, some Power above
Destroyed our host, and pressed the balance down
With most unequal fortune, and the Gods
Preserve the city of the Goddess Pallas.

Atoss. Is the Athenians' city then unsacked?

Mess. Their men are left, and that is bulwark strong.[1]

Atoss. Next tell me how the fight by sea began.
Who led the attack? Were those Hellenes the first,
Or was my son, exulting in his strength?

Mess. The author of the mischief, O my mistress,
Was some foul fiend or Power on evil bent;
For lo! a Hellene from the Athenian host[2]
Came to thy son, to Xerxes, and spake thus,
That should the shadow of the dark night come,
The Hellenes would not wait him, but would leap
Into their rowers' benches, here and there,
And save their lives in secret, hasty flight.
And he forthwith, this hearing, knowing not
The Hellene's guile, nor yet the Gods' great envy,
Gives this command to all his admirals,

[1] The fact that Athens had actually been taken, and its chief buildings plundered and laid waste, was, of course, not a pleasant one for the poet to dwell on. It could hardly, however, be entirely passed over, and this is the one allusion to it. In the truest sense it was still "unsacked:" it had not lost its most effective defence, its most precious treasure.

[2] As the story is told by Herodotos, (viii. 75,) this was Sikinnos, the slave of Themistocles, and the stratagem was the device of that commander to save the Greeks from the disgrace and ruin of a *sauve qui peut* ight in all directions.

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Soon as the sun should cease to burn the earth
With his bright rays, and darkness thick invade
The firmament of Heaven, to set their ships
In three-fold lines, to hinder all escape,
And guard the billowy straits, and others place
In circuit round about the isle of Aias :
For if the Hellenes 'scaped an evil doom,
And found a way of secret, hasty flight,
It was ordained that all should lose their heads.[1]
Such things he spake from soul o'erwrought with pride,
For he knew not what fate the Gods would send ;
And they, in no disorder, but obeying,
Then made their supper ready, and each sailor
Fastened his oar around true-fitting thole ;
And when the sunlight vanished, and the night
Had come, then each man, master of an oar,
Went to his ship, and all men bearing arms,
And rank encouraged rank in vessel long ;
And so they sail, as 'twas appointed each,
And all night long the captains of the fleet
Kept their men working, rowing to and fro ;
Night then came on, and the Hellenic host
In no wise sought to take to secret flight,
And when day, bright to look on with white steeds,
O'erspread the earth, then rose from the Hellenes
Loud chant of cry of battle, and forthwith

[1] The Greeks never beheaded their criminals, and the punishment is mentioned as being specially characteristic of the barbaric Persians.

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Echo gave answer from each island rock;
And terror then on all the Persians fell,
Of fond hopes disappointed. Not in flight
The Hellenes then their solemn pæans sang:
But with brave spirit hasting on to battle,
With martial sound the trumpet fired those ranks:
And straight with sweep of oars that flew through foam,
They smote the loud waves at the boatswain's call;
And swiftly all were manifest to sight.
Then first their right wing moved in order meet;[1]
Next the whole line its forward course began,
And all at once we heard a mighty shout,—
"O sons of Hellenes, forward, free your country;
Free too your wives, your children, and the shrines
Built to your fathers' Gods, and holy tombs
Your ancestors now rest in. Now the fight
Is for our all." And on our side indeed
Arose in answer din of Persian speech,
And time to wait was over: ship on ship
Dashed its bronze-pointed beak, and first a barque
Of Hellas did the encounter fierce begin,[2]
And from Phœnikian vessel crashes off
Her carved prow. And each against his neighbour
Steers his own ship: and first the mighty flood
Of Persian host held out. But when the ships

[1] The Æginetans and Megarians, according to the account preserved by Diodoros, (xi. 18,) or the Lacedæmonians, according to Herodotos, (viii. 65.)

[2] This may be meant to refer to the achievements of Ameinias of Pallene, who appears in the traditional life of Æschylos as his youngest brother.

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Were crowded in the straits,[1] nor could they give
Help to each other, they with mutual shocks,
With beaks of bronze went crushing each the other,
Shivering their rowers' benches. And the ships
Of Hellas, with manœuvring not unskilful,
Charged circling round them. And the hulls of ships
Floated capsized, nor could the sea be seen,
Filled, as it was, with wrecks and carcases;
And all the shores and rocks were full of corpses.
And every ship was wildly rowed in fight,
All that composed the Persian armament.
And they, as men spear tunnies,[2] or a haul
Of other fishes, with the shafts of oars,
Or spars of wrecks went smiting, cleaving down;
And bitter groans and wailings overspread
The wide sea-waves, till eye of swarthy night
Bade it all cease: and for the mass of ills,
Not, though my tale should run for ten full days,
Could I in full recount them. Be assured
That never yet so great a multitude
Died in a single day as died in this.

Atoss. Ah, me! Ah, me! Great then the sea of troubles

[1] *Sc.* as in Herod. viii. 60, the strait between Salamis and the mainland.

[2] Tunny-fishing has always been prominent in the occupations of the Mediterranean coasts, and the sailors who formed so large a part of every Athenian audience would be familiar with the process here described, of striking or harpooning them. Aristophanes (*Wasps*, 1087) coins (or uses) the word "to tunny," (θυννάζω,) to express the act. Comp. Herod. i. 62.

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That bursts on Persia and on Asia's hosts.

Mess. Be sure our evil fate is but half o'er:
On this has supervened such bulk of woe,
As more than twice to outweigh what I tell.

Atoss. And yet what fortune could be worse than this?
Say, what is this disaster which thou tell'st
That turns the scale to greater evils still?

Mess. Those Persians that were in the bloom of life,
Bravest in heart and noblest in their blood,
And by the king himself deemed worthiest trust,
Basely and by most shameful death have died.

Atoss. Ah! woe is me, my friends, for our ill fate!
What was the death by which thou say'st they died?

Mess. There is an isle that lies off Salamis,[1]
Small, with bad anchorage for ships, where Pan,
Pan the dance-loving, haunts the sea-washed coast.
There Xerxes sends these men, that when their foes,
Being wrecked, should to the islands safely swim,
They might with ease destroy th' Hellenic host,
And save their friends from out the deep sea's paths;
But ill the future guessing: for when God
Gave the Hellenes the glory of the battle,
In that same hour, with arms well wrought in bronze,

[1] *Sc.*, Psyttaleia, lying between Salamis and the mainland. Pausanias (i. 36–32) describes it in his time as having no artistic shrine or statue, but full everywhere of roughly-carved images of Pan, to whom the island was sacred. It lay just opposite the entrance to the Peiræos. The connexion of Pan with Salamis and its adjacent islands seems implied in Sophocles, *Aias*. 695.

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Shielding their bodies, from their ships they leapt,
And the whole isle encircled, so that we
Were sore distressed,[1] and knew not where to turn;
For here men's hands hurled many a stone at them;
And there the arrows from the archer's bow
Smote and destroyed them; and with one great rush,
At last advancing, they upon them dash
And smite, and hew the limbs of these poor wretches,
Till they their foes had utterly destroyed.
[And Xerxes when he saw how deep the ill,[2]
Groaned out aloud, for he had ta'en his seat,
With clear, wide view of all the army round,
On a high cliff hard by the open sea;
And tearing then his robes with bitter cry,
And giving orders to his troops on shore,
He sends them off in foul retreat. This grief
'Tis thine to mourn besides the former ills.]

Atossa. O hateful Power, how thou of all their hopes
Hast robbed the Persians! Bitter doom my son
Devised for glorious Athens, nor did they,
The invading host who fell at Marathon,
Suffice; but my son, counting it his task
To exact requital for it, brought on him
So great a crowd of sorrows. But I pray,

[1] The manœuvre was, we learn from Herodotos (viii. 95), the work of Aristeides, the personal friend of Æschylos, and the statesman with whose policy he had most sympathy.

[2] The lines are noted as probably a spurious addition, by a weaker hand, to the text, as introducing surplusage, as inconsistent with Herodotos, and as faulty in their metrical structure.

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As to those ships that have this fate escaped,
Where did'st thou leave them? Can'st thou clearly tell?
Mess. The captains of the vessels that were left,
With a fair wind, but not in meet array,
Took flight: and all the remnant of the army
Fell in Bœotia—some for stress of thirst
About the fountain clear, and some of us,
Panting for breath, cross to the Phokians' land,
The soil of Doris, and the Melian gulf,
Where fair Spercheios waters all the plains
With kindly flood, and then the Achæan fields
And city of the Thessali received us,
Famished for lack of food;[1] and many died
Of thirst and hunger, for both ills we bore;
And then to the Magnetian land we came,
And that of Macedonians, to the stream
Of Axios, and Bolbe's reed-grown marsh,
And Mount Pangaios and the Edonian land.
And on that night God sent a mighty frost,
Unwonted at that season, sealing up
The whole course of the Strymon's sacred flood;[2]
And he who erst had deemed the Gods as nought,

[1] So Herodotos (viii. 115) describes them as driven by hunger to eat even grass and leaves.

[2] No trace of this passage over the frozen Strymon appears in Herodotos, who leaves the reader to imagine that it was crossed, as before, by a bridge. It is hardly, indeed, consistent with dramatic probability that the courier should have remained to watch the whole retreat of the defeated army; and on this and other grounds, the latter part of the speech has been rejected by some critics as a later addition.

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Then prayed with hot entreaties, worshipping
Both earth and heaven. And after that the host
Ceased from its frequent calling on the Gods,
It crosses o'er the glassy, frozen stream;
And whosoe'er set forth before the rays
Of the bright God were shed abroad, was saved;
For soon the glorious sun with burning blaze
Reached the mid-stream and warmed it with its flame,
And they, confused, each on the other fell.
Blest then was he whose soul most speedily
Breathed out its last. And those who yet survived
And gained deliverance, crossing with great toil
And many a pang through Thrakè, now are come,
Escaped from perils, no great number they,
To this our sacred land, and so it groans,
This city of the Persians, missing much
Our country's dear-loved youth. Too true my tale,
And many things I from my speech omit,
Ills which the Persians suffer at God's hand.

Chor. O Power resistless, how o'erwhelmingly
On all the Persian race have thy feet leapt!

Atoss. Ah! woe is me for that our army lost!
Oh, vision of the night that cam'st in dreams!
Too clearly did'st thou shew me of these ills.
But ye (*to Chorus*) did judge them far too carelessly;
Yet since your counsel pointed to that course,
I to the Gods will first my prayer address.
And then with gifts to Earth and to the dead,

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Bringing the chrism from my store, I 'll come.
For our past ills, I know, 'tis all too late,
But for the future, I may hope, will dawn
A better fortune! But 'tis now your part
In these our present ills, in counsel faithful
To commune with the Faithful; and my son,
Should he come here before me, comfort him,
And home escort him, lest he add fresh ill
To all these evils that we suffer now. [*Exit.*

Chor. O Zeus our king, who now to nothing
Hast brought the army of the Persians,
Multitudinous, greatly boasting;
And with gloomy woe hast shrouded
Both Ecbatana and Susa;
Many maidens now are tearing
With their tender hands their mantles,
Wet with drenching tears their bosoms,
In the common grief partaking;
And the brides of Persian warriors,
Dainty even in their wailing,
Longing for their new-wed husbands,
Reft of bridal couch luxurious,
With its coverlet so dainty,
Losing joy of wanton youth-time,
Mourn in never-sated wailings.
And I too in fullest measure
Raise again the cry of sorrow,
Weeping for the loved and lost ones.

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STROPH. I.

For now the land of Asia mourneth sore,
Left desolate of men,
'Twas Xerxes led them forth, woe! woe!
'Twas Xerxes lost them all, woe! woe!
'Twas Xerxes who with evil counsels sped
Their course in sea-borne barques.
Why was Dareios erst so free from harm,
First bowman of the state,
The leader whom the men of Susa loved;

ANTISTROPH. I.

While those who fought as soldiers or at sea,
These ships, dark-hulled, well-rowed,
Their own ships bore them on, woe! woe!
Their own ships lost them all, woe! woe!
Their own ships, in disastrous onset urged,
And by Ionian hands?[1]
The king himself, we hear, but hardly 'scapes
Through Thrakè's wide-spread steppes,
And paths o'er which the tempests wildly sweep.

STROPH. II.

And they who perished first, ah me!
Perforce unburied left, alas!
Are scattered round Kychreia's shore,[2] woe! woe!
Lament, mourn sore, and raise a bitter cry,
Grievous, the sky to pierce, woe! woe!

[1] The Ionians, not of the Asiatic Ionia, but of Attica.
[2] Kychreia, the archaic name of Salamis.

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And let thy mourning voice uplift its strain
Of loud and full lament.

ANTISTROPH. II.

Torn by the whirling flood, ah me!
Their carcases are gnawed, alas!
By the dumb brood of the pure sea, woe! woe!
And each house mourneth for its vanished lord;
And childless sires, woe! woe!
Mourning in age o'er griefs the Gods have sent,
Now hear their utter loss.

STROPH. III.

And throughout all Asia's borders
None now own the sway of Persia,
Nor bring they any more their tribute,
Owning sway of sovereign master.
Now low upon the Earth, laid prostrate,
Is the strength of our great monarch.

ANTISTROPH. III.

No more need men keep in silence
Tongues fast bound: for now the people
May with freedom speak at pleasure;
For the yoke of power is broken;
And blood-stained in all its meadows
The sea-washed isle of Aias holdeth
What was once the Persian army.

Re-enter ATOSSA.

Atoss. Whoe'er, my friends, is vexed in troublous times,

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Knows that when once a tide of woe sets in,
A man is wont to fear in everything;
But when Fate flows on smoothly, then to trust
That the same Fate will ever send fair gales.
So now all these disasters from the Gods
Seem in mine eyes filled full of fear and dread,
And in mine ears rings cry unjubilant,
So great a dread of all has seized my soul:
And therefore now, without or chariot's state
Or former pomp, have I thus issued forth
From out my palace, to my son's sire bringing
Libations loving, gifts propitiatory,
Meet for the dead; milk pure and white from cow
Unblemished, and bright honey that distils
From the flower-working bee, and water drawn
From virgin fountain, and the draught unstained
From a wild mother, fruit of ancient vine;
And here too of the tree that evermore
Keeps its fresh life in foliage, the pale olive,
Is the sweet-smelling fruit, and twinèd wreaths
Of flowers, the children of all-fertile Earth.[1]
But ye, my friends, o'er these libations poured
In honour of the dead, chant forth your hymns,
And call upon Dareios as a God:
While I will send unto the Gods below

[1] The ritual described is Hellenic rather than Persian, and takes its place (Soph. *Electr.* 836; Eurip. *Iphig. Taur.* 583; Homer, *Il.* xxiii. 219), as showing what offerings were employed to soothe or call up the spirits of the dead. Comp. Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* xxx.

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These votive offerings which the earth shall drink.

[*Goes to the tomb of Dareios in the centre of the stage.*

Chor. O royal lady, honoured of the Persians,
Do thou libations pour
To the dark chambers of the dead below;
And we with hymns will pray
The Powers that act as escorts of the dead
To give us kindly help beneath the earth.
But oh, ye holy Ones in darkness dwelling,
Hermes and Earth, and thou, the Lord of Hell,
Send from beneath a soul
Up to the light of earth;
For should he know a cure for these our ills,
He, he alone of men, may tell the end.

STROPH. I.

Doth he, the blest one, hear,
The king, like Gods in power,
Hear me, as I send forth
My cries in barbarous speech,
Yet very clear to him,—
Sad, varied, broken cries
So as to tell aloud
Our troubles terrible?
Ah, does he hear below?

ANTISTROPH. I.

But thou, O Earth, and ye,
The other Lords of those

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Beneath the grave that dwell;
Grant that the godlike one
May come from out your home,
The Persians' mighty God,
In Susa's palace born;
Send him, I pray you, up,
The like of whom the soil
Of Persia never hid.

STROPH. II.

Dear was our chief, and dear to us his tomb,
For dear the life it hides;
Aidoneus, O Aidoneus, send him forth,
Thou who dost lead the dead to Earth again,
Yea, send Dareios, even as he was!

ANTISTROPH. II.

For never did he in war's bloody woe
Lose all his warrior-host,
But Heaven-taught Counsellor the Persians called him,
And Heaven-taught Counsellor in truth he proved,
Since he still ruled his host of subjects well.

STROPH. III.

Monarch, O ancient monarch, come, oh, come,
Come to the summit of sepulchral mound,
Lifting thy foot encased
In slipper saffron-dyed,
And giving to our view
Thy royal tiara's crest:[1]

[1] The description obviously gives the state dress of the Persian kings. They alone wore the tiara erect.—Xen. *Kyrop.* viii. 3, 13.

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Speak, O Dareios, faultless father, speak.

ANTISTROPH. III.

Yea, come, that thou, O Lord, may'st hear the woes,
Woes new and strange, our lord has now endured;
For on us now has fallen
A dark and Stygian mist,
Since all the armed youth
Has perished utterly;
Speak, O Dareios, faultless father, speak.

EPODE.

O thou, whose death thy friends
Bewail with many tears,
* Why thus, O Lord of lords,
* In double error of wild frenzy born,
Have all our triremes good
Been lost to this our land,
Ships that are ships no more, yea, ships no more?

The Ghost *of* DAREIOS *appears on the summit of the mound.*

Dar. O faithful of the Faithful, ye who were
Companions of my youth, ye Persian elders,
What troubles is 't my country toils beneath?
The whole plain groans, cut up and furrowed o'er,[1]
And I, beholding now my queen beloved

[1] Either that he has heard the measured tread of the mourners round his tomb, as they went wailing round and round, or that he has heard the rush of armies, and seen the plain tracked by chariot-wheels, and comes, not knowing all things, to learn what it means.

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Standing hard by my sepulchre, feared much,
And her libations graciously received;
But ye wail loud near this my sepulchre,
And shouting shrill with cries that raise the dead
Ye call me with your plaints. No easy task
Is it to come, for this cause above all,
That the great Gods who reign below are apter
To seize men than release: yet natheless I,
Being great in power among them, now am come.
Be quick then, that none blame me as too late;[1]
What new dire evils on the Persians weigh?

Chor. I fear to look on thee,
Fear before thee to speak,
With all the awe of thee I felt of old.

Dar. But since I came by thy complaints persuaded,
From below rising, spin no lengthened tale;
But shortly, clearly speak, and tell thy story,
And leave awhile thine awe and dread of me.

Chor. I dread thy wish to grant,
* I dread to say thee nay,[2]
Saying things that it is hard for friends to speak.

Dar. Nay then, since that old dread of thine prevents thee,
Do thou [*to Atossa*] the ancient partner of my bed,
My noble queen, from these thy plaints and moanings

[1] The words point to the wide-spread belief that when the souls of the dead were permitted to return to earth, it was with strict limitations as to the time of their leave of absence.

[2] Perhaps— "I dread to speak the truth."

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Cease, and say something clearly. Human sorrows
May well on mortals fall; for many evils,
Some on the sea, and some on dry land also,
Happen to men if life be far prolonged.

Atoss. O thou, who in the fate of fair good fortune
Excelled'st all men, who, while yet thou sawest
The sun's bright rays, did'st lead a life all blessed,
Admired, yea, worshipped as a God by Persians,
Now, too, I count thee blest in that thou died'st
Before thou saw'st the depth of these our evils.
For now, Dareios, thou shalt hear a tale
Full, yet in briefest moment. In a word,
The Persians' state is ruined utterly.

Dar. How so? Hath plague or discord seized my country?

Atoss. Not so, but all the host is lost at Athens.

Dar. What son of mine led that host thither, tell me?[1]

Atoss. Xerxes the mighty, emptying all the mainland.

Dar. Made he this mad attempt by land or sea?

Atoss. By both; two lines there were of two great armies.

Dar. How did so great a host effect its passage?

Atoss. He bridged the straits of Helle, and found transit.

Dar. Did he prevail to close the mighty Bosporos?

[1] According to Herodotos (vii. 225) two brothers of Xerxes fell at Thermopylæ.

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Atoss. So was it; yet some God, it may be, helped him.

Dar. Alas! some great God came and stole his wisdom.

Atoss. Yea, the end shows what evil he accomplished.

Dar. And how have they fared, that ye thus bewail them?

Atoss. The naval host, o'ercome, destroyed the army.

Dar. What! is the whole host by the spear laid low?

Atoss. For this doth Susa's city mourn her losses.

Dar. Alas, for that brave force and mighty army!

Atoss. The Bactrians all are lost, not old men merely.

Dar. Poor fool! how he hath lost the flower of forces!

Atoss. Xerxes, they say, alone, with but few others . . . .

Dar. What is his end, and where? Is there no safety?

Atoss. Is glad to gain the bridge that joins two mainlands.

Dar. And has he reached this mainland? Is that known well?

Atoss. Yea, the report holds good. Here is no discord.[1]

Dar. Ah me! Full swift the Oracles' fulfilment!
And on my son hath Zeus their end directed.
I hoped the Gods would work them out more slowly;

[1] As Herodotos (viii. 117) tells the story, the bridge had been broken by tempest before Xerxes reached it.

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But when man hastens, God too works with him.
And now for all my friends a fount of evils
Seems to be found. And this my son, not knowing,
In youth's rash mood, hath wrought; for he did think
To curb the sacred Hellespont with fetters,
As though it were his slave, and sought to alter
The stream of God, full-flowing Bosporos,
And with his hammered chains around it cast,
Prevailed to make his mighty host a highway;
And though a mortal, thought, with no good counsel,
To master all the Gods, yea, e'en Poseidon.
Nay, was not my poor son oppressed with madness?
And much I fear lest all my heaped-up treasure
Become the spoil and prey of the first comer.

Atoss. Such lessons haughty Xerxes hath been taught
By intercourse with men of evil mood:[1]
Who say that thou great wealth for thy sons gained'st
By thy spear's might, while he in cowardice
Does his spear-work indoors, and nothing adds
Unto his father's glory. Such reproach
Hearing full oft from men of evil mood,
He planned this expedition against Hellas.

Dar. Thus then a deed portentous hath been wrought,
Ever to be remembered, such as ne'er

[1] Probably Mardonios and Onomacritos the Athenian soothsayer are referred to, who, according to Herodotos (vii. 6, viii. 99) were the chief instigators of the expedition.

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Falling on Susa made it desolate,
Since Zeus our king ordained this dignity,
That one man should be lord of Asia's plains,
Where feed her thousand flocks, and hold the rod
Of sovran guidance : for the Median first [1]
Ruled o'er the host, and then his son in turn
Finished the work, for reason steered his soul ;
And Kyros came as third, full richly blest,
And ruled, and gained great peace for all his friends ;
And he won o'er the Lydians and the Phrygians,
And conquered all the wide Ionian land ; [2]
For such his wisdom, he provoked not God.
And Kyros' son came fourth, and ruled the host ;
And Mardos fifth held sway, his country's shame,[3]
Shame to the ancient throne ; and him with guile
Artaphrenes [4] the brave smote down, close leagued
With men, his friends, to whom the work was given.
[Sixth, Maraphis and seventh Artaphrenes.]

[1] Astyages, the father-in-law of Kyaxares and grandfather of Kyros. In this case Æschylos must be supposed to accept Xenophon's statement that Kyaxares succeeded Astyages. Possibly, however, the Median may be Kyaxares I., the father of Astyages, and so the succession here would harmonise with that of Herodotos. The whole succession must be looked on as embodying the loose, floating notions of the Athenians as to the history of their great enemy, rather than as the result of inquiry.

[2] Stress is laid on the violence to which the Asiatic Ionians had succumbed, and their resistance to which distinguished them from the Lydians or Phrygians, whose submission had been voluntary.

[3] Mardos. Under this name we recognise the Pseudo-Smerdis of Herodotos, (iii. 67,) who, by restoring the dominion of the Median Magi, the caste to which he himself belonged, brought shame npon the Persians.

[4] Possibly another form of Intaphernes, who appears in Herodotos (iii 70) as one of the seven conspirators against the Magian Pseudo-Smerdis.

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And I obtained this post that I desired,
And with a mighty host great victories won.
Yet no such evil brought I on the state;
But my son Xerxes, young, thinks like a youth,
And all my solemn charge remembers not;
For know this well, my old companions true,
That none of us who swayed the realm of old
Did e'er appear as working ills like these.

Chor. What then, O King Dareios? To what end
Lead'st thou thy speech? And how, in this our plight,
Could we the Persian people prosper best?

Dar. If ye no more attack the Hellenes' land,
E'en though the Median host outnumber theirs.
To them the land itself is true ally.

Chor. What meanest thou? How fights the land for them?

Dar. * It slays with famine those vast multitudes.

Chor. We then a host, select, compact, will raise.

Dar. Nay, e'en the host which now in Hellas stays[1]
Will ne'er return in peace and safety home.

Chor. How say'st thou? Does not all the barbarous host
Cross from Europa o'er the straits of Hellè?

Dar. But few of many; if 'tis meet for one
Who looks upon the things already done
To trust the oracles of Gods; for they,

[1] The force of 300,000 left in Greece under Mardonios, (Herod. viii. 113,) afterwards defeated at Platæa.

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Not these or those but all, are brought to pass:
And if this be so, then on vain hopes resting,[1]
He leaves a chosen portion of his army:
And they abide where, watering all the plain
Asôpos pours his fertilising stream
Dear to Bœotian land; and there of ills
The topmost crown awaits them, penalty
Of wanton outrage and of godless thoughts;
For they to Hellas coming, held not back
In awe from plundering even fanes of Gods[2]
And burning down their temples; and laid low
Are altars, and the shrines of Gods o'erthrown,
E'en from their base. They therefore having wrought
Deeds evil, now are suffering, and will suffer
Evil not less, and not as yet is seen
* The deep foundation of the ills, but still
They grow up to completeness. Such a stream
Of blood and slaughter soon shall flow from them
By Dorian spear upon Platæan ground,[3]
And heaps of corpses shall to children's children,

1 Comp. the speech of Mardonios urging this plan on Xerxes, (Herod. viii. 100.)

2 This was of course a popular topic with the Athenians, whose own temples had been outraged. But other sanctuaries also, the temples at Delphi and Abæ had shared the same fate, and these sins against the Gods of Hellas were naturally connected in the thoughts of the Greeks with the subsequent disasters of the Persians. In Egypt these outrages had an iconoclastic character. In Athens they were a retaliation for the destruction of the temple at Sardis, (Herod. v. 102.)

3 The reference to the prominent part taken by the Peloponnesian forces in the battle of Platææ is probably due to the political sympathies of the dramatist.

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Though speechless, witness to the eyes of men
That mortal man should not wax overproud;
For wanton pride from blossom grows to fruit,
The full corn in the ear, of utter woe,
And reaps a tear-fraught harvest. Seeing then,
Such recompense of these things, cherish well
The memory of Athens and of Hellas;
Let no man in his scorn of present fortune,
And thirst for other, mar his good estate;
Zeus is the avenger of o'erlofty thoughts,
A terrible controller. Therefore now,
Since voice of God bids him be wise of heart,
Admonish him with counsel true and good
To cease his daring sacrilegious pride;
And thou, O Xerxes' mother, old and dear,
Go to thy home, and taking what apparel
Is fitting, go to meet thy son; for all
The costly robes around his limbs are torn
To rags and shreds in very agony.
But do thou kindly soothe his soul with words;
For he to thee alone will deign to hearken;
But I must leave the earth for darkness deep:
And ye, old men, farewell, although in woe,
And give your soul its daily bread of joy;
For to the dead no profit bringeth wealth.

[*Exit, disappearing in the earth.*

Chor. I shudder as I hear the many woes
Both past and present that on Persians fall.

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Atoss. [O God, how many evils fall on me![1]
And yet this one woe biteth more than all,
Hearing my son's shame in the rags of robes
That clothe his limbs. But I will go and take
A fit adornment from my house, and try
To meet my son. We will not in his troubles
Basely abandon him whom most we love.]

STROPH. I.

Chor. Ah me! a glorious and a blessed life
Had we as subjects once,
When our old king, Dareios, ruled the land,
Meeting all wants, dispassionate, supreme,
A monarch like a God.

ANTISTROPH. I.

For first we showed the world our noble hosts;
And laws of tower-like strength
Directed all things; and our backward march
After our wars unhurt, unsuffering led
Our prospering armies home.

STROPH. II.

How many towns he took,
Not crossing Halys' stream[2]
Nor issuing from his home,
There where in Strymon's sea,

[1] The speech of Atossa is rejected by Paley, on internal grounds, as spurious.

[2] Apparently an allusion to the oracle given to Croesos, that he, if he crossed the Halys, should destroy a great kingdom.

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The Acheloian Isles[1]
Lie near the coasts of Thrakian colonies.

ANTISTROPH. II.

And those that lie outside the Ægæan sea,
The cities girt with towers,
They hearkened to our king;
And those who boast their site
By Hellè's full, wide stream,
Propontis with its bays, and mouth of Pontos broad.

STROPH. III.

And all the isles that lie
Facing the headland jutting in the sea,[2]
Close bound to this our coast;
Lesbos, and Samos with its olive groves;
Chios and Paros too;
Naxos and Myconos, and Andros too
On Tenos bordering.

ANTISTROPH. III.

And so he ruled the isles
That lie midway between the continents,
Lemnos, Icaria's land;
Rhodos and Cnidos and the Kyprian towns,

[1] The name originally given to the Echinades, a group of islands at the mouth of the Achelŏus, was applied generically to all islands lying near the mouth of great rivers, and here, probably, includes Imbros, Thasos, and Samothrakè.

[2] The geography is somewhat obscure, but the words seem to refer to the portion of the islands that are named as opposite (in a southerly direction) to the promontory of the Troad.

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Paphos and Salamis,
And with them Soli famed,
Whose parent city now our groans doth cause;[1]

EPODE.

And many a wealthy town and populous,
Of Hellenes in the Ionian region dwelling,
He governed at his will;
His was the unconquered strength of warrior host,
Allies of mingled race.
And now, beyond all doubt,
In strife of war defeated utterly,
We find this high estate
Through wrath of God o'erturned
By bitter loss at sea.

Enter XERXES *in kingly apparel, but with his robes rent, with* Attendants.

Xer. Oh, miserable me!
Who this dark hateful doom
That I expected least
Have met with as my lot,
How stern and fierce of mood
Towards the Persian race
God has displayed himself!
What woe will come on me?
Gone is my strength of limb,
These aged men beholding.

[1] Salamis in Kypros had been colonised by Teukros the son of Aias, and had received its name in remembrance of the island in the Saronic Gulf.

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Ah, would to Heaven, O Zeus,
That with the men who fell
Death's doom had covered me!
Chor. Ah woe, O king, woe! woe!
For the army brave in fight,
And our goodly Persian name,
And the fair array of men,
Whom God hath now cut off!
And the land bewails its youth
Who for our Xerxes fell,
For him whose deeds have filled
* Hades with Persian souls;
For many heroes now
* Are Hades-travellers,
Our country's chosen flower,
Mighty with darts and bow;
* For lo! the myriad mass
Of men has perished quite.
Woe, woe for our fair fame!
And Asia's land, O King,
Is terribly, most terribly, overthrown.
Xer. I then, oh misery!
Have to my curse been proved
Sore evil to my country and my race.
Chor. Yea, and on thy return
I will lift up my voice in wailing sore,
Cry of sore-troubled thought,
As of a mourner born

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In Mariandynian land,
Lament of many tears.

ANTISTROPH. I.

Xer. Yea, utter ye a wail
Dreary and full of grief;
For lo! the face of Fate
Against me now is turned.

Chor. Yea, I will raise a cry
Dreary and full of grief,
Giving this tribute due
To all the people's woes,
And all our loss at sea,
Troubles of this our State
That mourneth for her sons;
Yea, I will wail full sore,
With flood of bitter tears.

STROPH. II.

Xer. For lo! our naval host,
Giving victory to our foes,
Has from Ionians, yea,
Ionians, suffered loss,
Leaving the dark sea's plain,
And that ill-omened shore,
Stripped of its strength for war.

Chor. Yea, wail, search out the whole;
Where are our other friends?
Where thy companions true,
Such as Pharandakes,

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Susas, Pelagon, Psammis, Dotamas,
Agdabatas, Susiskanes
From Ecbatana who started?

ANTISTROPH. II.

Xer. I left them low in death,
Falling from Tyrian ship,
On Salaminian shores,
Beating now here, now there,
On the hard rock-girt coast.
Chor. Ah, where Pharnuchos then,
And Ariomardos brave?
And where Sevalkes king,
Lilæos proud of race,
Memphis and Tharybis,
Masistras, and Artembares,
Hystæchmas? This I ask.

STROPH. III.

Xer. Woe! woe is me!
They have looked on at Athens' ancient towers,
Her hated towers, ah me!
All, as by one fell stroke,
Unhappy in their fate
Lie gasping on the shore.
Chor. And he, thy faithful Eye,[1]
Who told the Persian host,
Myriads on myriads o'er,[2]

[1] The name seems to have been an official title for some Inspector-General of the Army. Comp. Aristoph. *Acharn.* v. 92.

[2] As in the account which Herodotos gives (vii. 60) of the way in which

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Alpistos, son and heir
Of Batanôchos old,
* * * * *
And the son of brave Sesames,
Son himself of Megabates.
Parthos, and the great Œbares,
Did'st thou leave them, did'st thou leave them?
Ah, woe! ah, woe is me,
For those unhappy ones!
Thou to the Persians brave
Tellest of ills on ills.

ANTISTROPH. III.

Xer. Ah, thou dost wake in me
The memory of the spell of yearning love
For comrades brave and true,
Telling of cursed ills,
Yea, cursed, hateful doom; 970
And lo, within my frame
My heart cries out, cries out.
Chor. Yea, another too we long for,
Xanthes, captain of ten thousand
Mardian warriors, and Anchares
Arian born, and great Arsakes
And Diæxis, lords of horsemen,
Kigdagatas and Lythimnas,
Tolmos, longing for the battle: 980

the army of Xerxes was numbered, *sc.*, by enclosing 10,000 men in a given space, and then filling it again and again till the whole army had passed through.

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* Much I marvel, much I marvel,[1]
For they come not, as the rear-guard
Of thy tent on chariot mounted.[2]

STROPH. IV.

Xer. Gone those rulers of the army.
Chor. Gone are they in death inglorious.
Xer. Ah woe! ah woe! Alas! alas!
Chor. Ah! the Gods have sent upon us
Ill we never thought to look on,
Conspicuous like to which in sorrow
Ne'er hath Atè seen another.

ANTISTROPH. IV.

Xer. Smitten we by many sorrows
Such as come on men but seldom.
Chor. Smitten we, 'tis all too certain.
Xer. Fresh woes! fresh woes! ah me!
Chor. Now with adverse turn of fortune,
With Ionian seamen meeting,
Fails in war the race of Persians.

STROPH. V.

Xer. Too true. Yea I and that vast host of mine
Are smitten down.
Chor. Too true—the Persians' majesty and might
Have perished utterly.

[1] Another reading gives—
"They are buried, they are buried."

[2] Perhaps referring to the waggon-chariots in which the rider reclined at ease, either protected by a canopy, or, as in the Assyrian sculptures and perhaps in the East generally, overshadowed by a large umbrella which an eunuch holds over him.

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Xer. See'st thou this remnant of my armament?
Chor. I see it, yea, I see.
Xer. (*pointing to his quiver.*) Dost see thou that which arrows wont to hold? . . .
Chor. What speak'st thou of as saved?
Xer. This treasure-store for darts.
Chor. Few, few of many left!
Xer. Thus we all helpers lack.
Chor. Ionian soldiers flee not from the spear.

ANTISTROPH. V.

Xer. Yea, very brave are they, and I have seen Unlooked-for woe.
Chor. Wilt tell of squadron of our sea-borne ships Defeated utterly?
Xer. I tore my robes at this calamity.
Chor. Ah me, ah me, ah me!
Xer. Ay, more than all 'ah me's'!
Chor. Two-fold and three-fold ills!
Xer. Grievous to us—but joy, Great joy, to all our foes!
Chor. Lopped off is all our strength.
Xer. Stripped bare of escort I!
Chor. Yea, by sore loss at sea Disastrous to thy friends.

STROPH. VI.

Xer. Weep for our sorrow, weep, Yea, go ye to the house.
Chor. Woe for our griefs, woe, woe!

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Xer. Cry out an echoing cry.
Chor. Ill gift of ills on ills.
Xer. Weep on in wailing chant.
Chor. Oh! ah! Oh! ah!
Xer. Grievous our bitter woes.
Chor. Ah me, I mourn them sore.

ANTISTROPH. VI.

Xer. Ply, ply your hands and groan;
Yea, for my sake bewail.
Chor. I weep in bitter grief.
Xer. Cry out an echoing cry.
Chor. Yea, we may raise our voice,
O Lord and King, in wail.
Xer. Raise now shrill cry of woe.
Chor. Ah me! Ah! Woe is me!
Xer. Yea, with it mingle dark . . . .
Chor. And bitter, grievous blows.

STROPH. VII.

Xer. Yea, beat thy breast, and cry
After the Mysian type.
Chor. Oh, misery! oh, misery!
Xer. Yea, tear the white hair off thy flowing beard.
Chor. Yea; with clenched hands, with clenchèd hands, I say,
In very piteous guise.
Xer. Cry out, cry out aloud.
Chor. That also will I do.

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ANTISTROPH. VII.

Xer. And with thy fingers tear
Thy bosom's folded robe.
Chor. Oh, misery! oh, misery!
Xer. Yea, tear thy hair in wailing for our host.
Chor. Yea, with clenched hands, I say, with clenchèd hands,
In very piteous guise.
Xer. Be thine eyes wet with tears.
Chor. Behold the tears stream down.

EPODE.

Xer. Raise a re-echoing cry.
Chor. Ah woe! ah woe!
Xer. Go to thy home with wailing loud and long.
Chor. O land of Persia, full of lamentations!
Xer. Through the town raise your cries.
Chor. We raise them, yea, we raise.
Xer. Wail, wail, ye men that walked so daintily.
Chor. O land of Persia, full of lamentations!
Woe! woe!
Xer. Alas for those who in the triremes perished!
Chor. With piteous words of woe will I escort thee.

[*Exeunt in procession, wailing, and rending their robes.*

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THE SEVEN WHO FOUGHT AGAINST THEBES.

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ARGUMENT.

When Œdipus king of Thebes discovered that he had unknowingly been the murderer of his father, and had lived in incest with his mother, he blinded himself. And his two sons, Eteocles and Polyneikes, wishing to banish the remembrance of these horrors from the eyes of men, at first kept him in confinement. And he, being wroth with them, prayed that they might divide their inheritance with the sword. And they, in fear lest the prayer should be accomplished, agreed to reign in turn, each for a year, and Eteocles, as the elder of the two, took the first turn. But when at the end of the year Polyneikes came to ask for the kingdom, Eteocles refused to give way, and sent him away empty. So Polyneikes went to Argos and married the daughter of Adrastos the king of that country, and gathered together a great army under six great captains, himself coming as the seventh, and led it against Thebes. And so they compassed it about, and at each of the seven gates of the city was stationed one of the divisions of the army.

Note.—The *Seven against Thebes* appears to have been produced B.C. 472, the year after *The Persians*.

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Dramatis Personae.

ETEOCLES.

Scout.

ISMENE.

ANTIGONE.

Herald.

Chorus of Theban Maidens.

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THE SEVEN WHO FOUGHT AGAINST THEBES.

SCENE.—Thebes, *in front of the Acropolis.*

Enter ETEOCLES, *and crowd of* Theban Citizens.

Eteoc. Ye citizens of Cadmos, it behoves
That one who standeth at the stern of state
Guiding the helm, with eyes unclosed in sleep,
Should speak the things that meet occasion's need.
For should we prosper, God gets all the praise:
But if (which God forbid!) disaster falls,
Eteocles, much blame on one head falling,
Would find his name the bye-word of the state,[1]
Sung in the slanderous ballads of the town;
Yes, and with groanings, which may Zeus the Averter,
True to his name, from us Cadmeians turn!

[1] Probably directed against the tendency of the Athenians, as shown in their treatment of Miltiades, and later in that of Thukydides, to punish their unsuccessful generals, "*pour encourager les autres.*"

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But now 'tis meet for all, both him who fails
Of full-grown age, and him advanced in years,
Yet boasting still a stalwart strength of frame,
And each in life's full prime, as it is fit,
The State to succour and the altars here
Of these our country's gods, that never more
Their votive honours cease,—to help our sons,
And Earth, our dearest mother and kind nurse;
For she, when young ye crept the kindly plains,
Bearing the whole charge of your nourishment,
Reared you as denizens that bear the shield,
That ye should trusty prove in this her need.
And now thus far God turns the scale for us;
For unto us, beleaguered these long days,
War doth in most things with God's help speed well,
But now, as saith the seer, the augur skilled,[1]
Watching with ear and mind, apart from fire,
The birds oracular with mind unerring,
He, lord and master of these prophet-arts,
Says that the great attack of the Achæans
This very night is talked of, and their plots
Devised against the town. But ye, haste all
Unto the walls and gateways of the forts;
Rush ye full-armed, and fill the outer space,
And stand upon the platforms of the towers,
And at the entrance of the gates abiding

1 Teiresias, as in Sophocles, (*Antig.* v. 1005,) sitting, though blind, and listening, as the birds flit by him, and the flames burn steadily or fitfully.

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Be of good cheer, nor fear ye overmuch
The host of aliens. Well will God work all.
And I have sent my scouts and watchers forth,
And trust their errand is no fruitless one.
I shall not, hearing them, be caught with guile.
[*Exeunt* Citizens.

Enter one of the Scouts.

Mess. King of Cadmeians, great Eteocles,
I from the army come with tidings clear,
And am myself eye-witness of its acts;
For seven brave warriors, leading armèd bands,
Cutting a bull's throat o'er a black-rimmed shield,
And dipping in the bull's blood with their hands,
Swore before Ares, Enyo, murderous Fear,
That they would bring destruction on our town,
And trample under foot the tower of Cadmos,
Or dying, with their own blood stain our soil;
And they memorials for their sires at home
Placed with their hands upon Adrastos' car,[1]
Weeping, but no wail uttering with their lips,
For courage iron-hearted breathed out fire
In manliness unconquered, as when lions
Flash battle from their eyeballs. And report
Of these things does not linger on the way.
I left them casting lots, that each might take,

[1] Amphiaraos the seer had prophesied that Adrastos alone should return home in safety. On his car, therefore, the other chieftains hung the clasps, or locks of hair, or other memorials which in the event of their death were to be taken to their parents.

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As the lot fell, his station at the gate.
Wherefore do thou our city's chosen ones
Array with speed at entrance of the gates;
For near already is the Argive host
Marching through clouds of dust, and whitening foam
Spots all the plain with drops from horses' mouths.
And thou, as prudent helmsman of the ship,
Guard thou our fortress ere the blasts of Ares
Swoop on it wildly; for there comes the roar
Of the land-wave of armies. And do thou
Seize for these things the swiftest tide and time;
And I, in all that comes, will keep my eye
As faithful sentry; so through speech full clear,
Thou, knowing all things yonder, shalt be safe.

[*Exit.*

Eteoc. O Zeus and Earth, and all ye guardian Gods!
Thou Curse and strong Erinnys of my sire!
Destroy ye not my city root and branch,
With sore destruction smitten, one whose voice
Is that of Hellas, nor our hearths and homes;[1]
Grant that they never hold in yoke of bondage
Our country free, and town of Cadmos named;
But be ye our defence. I deem I speak
Of what concerns us all; for still 'tis true,
A prosperous city honours well the Gods. [*Exit.*

[1] The Hellenic feeling, such as the Platæans appealed to in the Peloponnesian war (Thuc. iii. 58, 59,) that it was noble and right for Hellenes to destroy a city of the barbarians, but that they should spare one belonging to a people of their own stock.

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Enter Chorus of Theban Maidens *in solemn procession as suppliants.*

Chor. I in my terror utter cries of woe;
An army leaves its camp and is let loose:
Hither the vanguard of the horsemen flows,
And the thick cloud of dust,
Appearing suddenly,
Herald full clear though dumb,
Constrains me to believe;
And smitten with the horses' hoofs, the plain
Of this my country rings with noise of war;
It floats and echoes round,
Like voice of torrent irresistible
Down rushing from the hills.
Ah Gods! Ah Goddesses!
Ward off the coming woe.
With battle-shout that rises o'er the walls,
The host whose shields are white [1]
Marches in full array against our city.
Who then, of all the Gods
Or Goddesses, will come to help and save?
Say, shall I fall before the shrines of Gods?
O blessed Ones firm fixed!
'Tis time to clasp your sacred images.
Why linger we in wailing overmuch?

[1] The characteristic feature of the Argive soldiers was, that they bore a shield painted white, (comp. Sophocles, *Antig.* v. 114.) The leaders alone appear to have embellished this with devices and mottoes.

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Hear ye, or hear ye not, the din of shields?
When, if not now, shall we
Engage in prayer with peplos and with boughs?[1]
I hear a mighty sound; it is the din
Not of a single spear.
O Ares! ancient guardian of our land!
What wilt Thou do? Wilt Thou betray thy land?
O God of golden casque,
Look on our city, yea, with favour look,
The city Thou did'st love.
And ye, ye Gods who o'er the city rule,
Come all of you, come all.
Behold the band of maidens suppliant,
In fear of slavery;
For now around the town
The wave of warriors bearing slopèd crests,
With blasts of Ares rushing, hoarsely sounds:
But thou, O Zeus! true father of us all,
Ward off, ward off our capture by the foe.

STROPH. I.

For Argives now surround the town of Cadmos,
And dread of Ares' weapons falls on us;
And, bound to horses' mouths,
The bits and curbs ring music as of death;

[1] In solemn supplications, the litanies of the ancient world, especially in those to Pallas, the suppliants carried with them in procession the shawl or *peplos* of the Goddess, and with it enwrapt her statue. To carry boughs of trees in the hands was one of the uniform, probably indispensable, accompaniments of such processions.

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And seven chief rulers of the mighty host,
With warriors' arms, at each of seven tall gates,
Spear-armed and harnessed all,
Stand, having cast their lots.

* * * * *

MESODE.

And Thou, O Zeus-born power in war delighting,
O Pallas! be our city's saviour now;
And Thou who curb'st the steed,
Great King of Ocean's waves,
Poseidon, with thy trident fish-spear armed,[1]
Give respite from our troubles, respite give!
And Thou, O Ares, guard the town that takes
Its name from Cadmos old,[2]
Watch o'er it visibly.

ANTISTROPH. I.

And thou, O Kypris, mother of our race,
Ward off these ills, for we are thine by blood:
To thee in many a prayer,
With voice that calls upon the Gods, we cry,
And unto thee draw near as suppliants:
And Thou, Lykeian king, Lykeian be,[3]
Foe of our hated foes,

1 The words recall our thoughts to the original use of the trident, which became afterwards a symbol of Poseidon, as employed by the sailors of Hellas to spear or harpoon the larger fish of the Archipelago. Comp. *Pers.* v. 426, where the slaughter of a defeated army is compared to tunny-fishing.

2 Cadmos, probably "the man from the East," the Phœnikian who had founded Thebes, and sown the dragon's seed, and taught men a Semitic alphabet for the non-Semitic speech of Hellas.

3 Worthy of his name as the Wolf-destroyer, mighty to destroy his foes.

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For this our wailing cry;
And Thou, O child of Leto, Artemis,
Make ready that thy bow.

STROPH. II.

Ah! ah! I hear a din of chariot wheels
Around the city walls;
O Hera great and dread!
The heavy axles of the chariots groan,
O Artemis beloved!
And the air maddens with the clash of spears;
What must our city bear?
What now shall come on us?
What end brings God to pass?

ANTISTROPH. II.

Ah! ah! a storm of stones is falling fast
On battlements attacked;[1]
O Lord, Apollo loved,
A din of bronze-bound shields is in the gates:
And oh! that Zeus may give
A pure, decisive issue of the strife!
And Thou, oh blessed queen,
As Guardian Onca known,[2]
Save thy seven-gated seat.

1 Possibly, "*from* battlements attacked." In the primitive sieges of Greek warfare stones were used as missiles alike by besieged and besiegers.

2 The name of Onca belonged especially to the Theban worship of Pallas, and was said to have been of Phœnikian origin, introduced by Cadmos. There seems, however, to have been a town Onkæ in Bœotia, with which the name was doubtless connected.

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STROPH. III.

And ye, all-working Gods,
Of either sex divine,
Protectors of our towers,
Give not our city, captured by the spear,
To host of alien speech.[1]
Hear ye our maidens; hear,
As is most meet, our prayers with outstretched hands.

ANTISTROPH. III.

O all ye loving Powers,
Compass our State to save;
Make clear your love for us;
Look on our public votive offerings,
And as ye look, oh, help:
Be mindful ye, I pray,
Of all our city's sacrificial rites.

Re-enter ETEOCLES.

Eteoc. [*To the Chorus.*] I ask you, O ye brood intolerable,
Is this course best and safest for our city?
Will it give heart to our beleaguered host,
That you before the forms of guardian Gods
Should wail and howl, ye loathèd of the wise?[2]

[1] "Alien," on account of the difference of dialect between the speech of Argos and that of Bœotia, though both were Hellenic.

[2] The vehemence with which Eteocles reproves the wild frenzied wailing of the Chorus may be taken as an element of the higher culture showing itself in Athenian life, which led Solon to restrain such lamentations by

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Ne'er be it mine, in ill estate or good,
To dwell together with the race of women;
For when they rule, their daring bars approach,
And when they fear, alike to house and state
A greater ill: and now with these your rushings
Hither and thither, ye have troubled sore
Our subjects with a coward want of heart,
And do your best for those our foes without;
And we are harassed by ourselves within.
This comes to one who dwells with womankind.
And if there be that will not own my sway,
Or man or woman in their prime, or those
Who can be classed with neither, theirs is doom
Of death, nor shall they at the people's hands
'Scape fate of stoning. Things outdoors are still
The man's to look to: let not woman counsel.
Stay thou within, and do no mischief more.
Hear'st thou, or no? or speak I to the dumb?

STROPH. I.

Chor. Dear son of Œdipus,
I shuddered as I heard the din, the din
Of many a chariot's noise,
When on the axles creaked the whirling wheels,
*And when I heard the sound
*Of fire-wrought curbs within the horses' mouths.
Eteoc. What then? Did ever yet the sailor flee

special laws, (Plutarch, *Solon*, c. 20.) Here, too, we note in Æschylos an echo of the teaching of Epimenides.

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From stern to stem, and find deliverance so,
While his ship laboured in the ocean's wave?[1]

ANTISTROPH. I.

Chor. Nay, to the ancient forms
Of mighty Powers I rushed, as trusting Gods;
And when behind the gates
Was heard the crash of fierce and pelting storm,
Then was it, in my fear,
I prayed the Blessed Ones to guard our city.

Eteoc. Pray that our towers hold out 'gainst spear of foes.[2]

Chor. Do not the Gods grant these things?

Eteoc. Nay, the Gods,
So say they, leave the captured city's walls.[3]

STROPH. II.

Chor. Ah! never in my life
May all this goodly company of Gods
Depart; nor may I see

[1] As now the sailor of the Mediterranean turns to the image of his patron saint, so of old he ran in his distress to the figure of his God upon his prow, (often, as in Acts xxviii. 11, that of the *Dioscuri*,) and called to it for deliverance, (comp. Jonah, i. 8.)

[2] Eteocles seems to wish for a short, plain prayer for deliverance, instead of the cries and supplications and vain repetitions of the chorus.

[3] The thought thus expressed was, that the Gods, yielding to the mightier law of destiny, or in their wrath at the guilt of men, left the city before its capture. The feeling was all but universal. Its two representative instances are found in Virgil, *Æn.* 351—

"Excessere omnes adytis arisque relictis
Di quibus imperium hoc steterat;"

and the narrative given alike by Tacitus (*Hist.* v. 13) and Josephus (*Bell. Jud.* vi. 5, 3) that the cry "Let us depart hence," was heard at midnight through the courts of the Temple, before the destruction of Jerusalem.

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This city scene of rushings to and fro,
*And hostile army burning it with fire!
Eteoc. Nay, call not on the Gods with counsel base;
Obedience is the mother of success,
Child strong to save. 'Tis thus the saying runs.

ANTISTROPH. II.

Chor. True is it; but the Gods
Have yet a mightier power, and oftentimes,
In pressure of sore ill,
It raises one perplexed from direst woe,
When dark clouds gather thickly o'er his eyes.
Eteoc. 'Tis work of men to offer sacrifice
And victims to the Gods, when foes press hard;
Thine to be dumb and keep within the house.

STROPH. III.

Chor. 'Tis through the Gods we live
In city unsubdued, and that our towers
Ward off the multitude of jealous foes.
Whose wrath on this will frown?
Eteoc. I grudge not your devotion to the Gods;
But lest you make my citizens faint-hearted
Be tranquil, nor to fear's excess give way.

ANTISTROPH. III.

Chor. Hearing but now a din
Strange, wildly mingled, I with shrinking fear
Here to our city's high Acropolis,
A hallowed spot, have come.
Eteoc. Nay, if ye hear of wounded men or dying,

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Bear them not swiftly off with wailing loud;
*For blood of men is Ares' chosen food.[1]

Chor. Hark! now I hear the panting of the steeds.

Eteoc. Clear though thou hear, yet hear not overmuch.

Chor. Lo! from its depths the city groans, encompassed.

Eteoc. It is enough that I provide for this.

Chor. I fear: the din increases at the gates.

Eteoc. Be still, say nought of these things in the city.

Chor. O holy band![2] abandon not our towers.

Eteoc. A curse fall on thee; wilt thou not be still?

Chor. Gods of my city! from the slave's lot save me.

Eteoc. 'Tis thou enslav'st thyself and all thy city.

Chor. Oh! turn thy darts, great Zeus, against our foes.

Eteoc. Oh, Zeus, what race of women thou hast given us!

Chor. A sorry race, like men whose city falls.

Eteoc. Dost bandy words when clinging to these statues?

Chor. Fear hurries on my tongue in want of courage.

Eteoc. Could'st thou but grant one small boon at my prayer!

Chor. Speak it out quickly, and I soon shall know.

Eteoc. Be still, poor fool, and frighten not thy friends.

[1] *Sc.*, Blood must be shed in war. Ares would not be Ares without it. It is better to take it as it comes.

[2] *Sc.*, the company of Gods, Pallas, Hera, and the others whom the Chorus had invoked.

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Chor. Still am I, and with others bear our fate.

Eteoc. These words of thine I much prefer to those:

And further, though no longer at the shrines,
Pray thou for victory, that the Gods fight with us:
And when my prayers thou hearest, then do thou
Raise a loud, welcome, holy pæan shout,
The Hellenes' wonted cry at sacrifice;
So cheer thy friends, and check their fear of foes;
And I unto our country's guardian Gods,
Who hold the plain or watch the agora,
The springs of Dirkè, and Ismenos' stream;—
If things go well, and this our city 's saved,—
I vow that staining with the blood of sheep
The altar-hearths of Gods, or slaying bulls,
We 'll fix our trophies, and our foemen's robes
On the spear's point on consecrated walls,
Before the shrines I 'll hang.[1] Pray thou this prayer,
Not weakly wailing, nor with vain wild sobs,
For no whit more thou 'lt 'scape thy destined lot:
And I six warriors, with myself as seventh,
Against our foes in battle's full array,
Will station at the seven gates' entrances,
Ere hurrying heralds and swift-rushing words
Come and inflame them in the stress of need. [*Exit.*

[1] Reference to this custom, which has passed from Pagan temples into Christian churches, is found in the *Agamemnon*, v. 562. It was connected, of course, with the general practice of offering as *ex votos* any personal ornaments or clothing as a token of thanksgiving for special mercies.

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STROPH. I.

Chor. My heart is full of care, and knows not sleep,
By panic fear o'ercome;
And troubles throng my soul,
And set a-glow my dread
Of the great host encamped around our walls,
As when a trembling dove
Fears for her nestling brood
The snakes that come, ill mates for nightly couch;
For some upon our towers
March in full strength of mingled multitude;
And what will me befall?
And others on our men on either hand
Hurl rugged blocks of stone.
In every way, ye Zeus-born Gods, defend
The city and the host
That Cadmos claim as sire.

ANTISTROPH. I.

What better land will ye receive for this,
If ye to foes resign
This rich and fertile clime,
And that Dirkæan stream,
Goodliest of founts by great Poseidon sent,
Who circleth earth, or those
Who Tethys parent call![1]
And therefore, O ye Gods that guard our city,
Sending on those without

[1] Rivers and streams as the children of Tethys and Okeanos.

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Our towers a woe that robs men of their life,
And bids them lose their shield,
Gain glory for these countrymen of mine;
And take your standing-ground,
As saviours of the city, firm and true,
In answer to our cry
Of wailing and of prayer.

STROPH. II.

For sad it were to hurl to Hades dark
A city of old fame,
The spoil and prey of war,
With foulest shame in dust and ashes laid,
By an Achæan foe and God's decree;
And that our women, old and young alike,
Be dragged away, ah me!
Like horses, by their hair,
Their robes torn off from them.
And lo, the city wails, made desolate,
While with confused cry
The wretched prisoners meet doom worse than death.
Ah, at this grievous fate
I shudder ere it comes.

ANTISTROPH. II.

And piteous 'tis for those whose youth is fresh,
Before the rites that cull
The fair and first-ripe fruit,
To take a hateful journey from their homes.
Nay, but I say the dead far better fare

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Than these, for when a city is subdued
It bears full many an ill.
This man takes prisoner that,
Or slays, or burns with fire;
And all the city is defiled with smoke,
And Ares fans the flame
In wildest rage, and laying many low,
Tramples with foot unclean
On all men sacred hold.

STROPH. III.

And hollow din is heard throughout the town,
Hemmed in by net of towers;
And man by man is slaughtered with the spear,
And cries of bleeding babes,
Of children at the breast,
Are heard in piteous wail:
And rapine, sister of the plunderer's rush;
Spoiler with spoiler meets,
And empty-handed empty-handed calls,
Wishing for share of gain,
Both eager for a portion no whit less,
For more than equal lot
With what they deem the others' hands have found.

ANTISTROPH. III.

And all earth's fruits cast wildly on the ground,
Meeting the cheerless eye
Of frugal housewives, give them pain of heart;
And many a gift of earth

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In formless heaps is whirled
In waves of nothingness;
And the young maidens know a sorrow new;
For now the foe prevails,
And gains the prize of wretched captive's bed;
And all their hope is then,
That night of death will come to end their grief,
Death coming to relieve,
True friend in need, their sorrow fraught with tears.

Enter ETEOCLES, *followed by his* Chief Captains, *and by the* Scout.

Semi-Chor. 1. The army scout, so deem I, brings to us,
Dear friends, some tidings new, with quickest speed
Plying the nimble axles of his feet.

Semi-Chor. Yea, the king's self, the son of Œdipus,
Is nigh to hear the scout's exact report;
And haste denies him too an even step.

Mess. I knowing well, will our foes' state report,
How each his lot hath stationed at the gates.
At those of Prœtos, Tydeus thunders loud,
And him the prophet suffers not to cross
Ismenos' fords, the victims boding ill.[1]
And Tydeus, raging eager for the fight,
Shouts like a serpent in its noon-tide scream,

1 Here, as in v. 571, Tydeus appears as the real leader of the expedition, who had persuaded Adrastos and the other chiefs to join in it, and Amphiaraos, the prophet, the son of Œcleus, as having all along foreseen its disastrous issue.

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And on the prophet, Œcleus' son, heaps shame,
That he, in coward fear, did crouch and fawn
Before the doom and peril of the fight.
And with such speech he shakes his triple crest,
O'ershadowing all his helm, and 'neath his shield
Bells wrought in bronze ring out their chimes of fear;
And on his shield he bears this proud device,—
A firmament enchased, all bright with stars;[1]
And in the midst the full moon's glittering orb,
Sovran of stars and eye of Night, shines forth.
And thus exulting in o'er-boastful arms,
By the stream's banks he shouts in lust of war,
[E'en as a war-horse panting in his strength
Against the curb that galls him, who at sound
Of trumpet's clang chafes hotly.] Whom wilt thou
Set against him? Who is there strong enough
When the bolts yield, to guard the Prœtan gates?

Eteoc. No fear have I of any man's array;
Devices have no power to pierce or wound,
And crest and bells bite not without a spear;
And for this picture of the heavens at night,
Of which thou tellest, glittering on his shield,
* Perchance his madness may a prophet prove;
For if night fall upon his dying eyes,

[1] The legend of the Medusa's head on the shield of Athena shows the practice of thus decorating shields to have been of remote date. In Homer it does not appear as common, and the account given of the shield of Achilles lays stress upon the work of the artist (Hephæstos) who wrought the shield in relief, not, as here, upon painted insignia. They were obviously common in the time of Æschylos.

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Then for the man who bears that boastful sign
It may right well be all too truly named,
And this his pride against him prophesy.
And against Tydeus, to defend the gates,
I'll set this valiant son of Astacos;
Noble is he, and honouring well the throne
Of Reverence, and hating vaunting speech,
Slow to all baseness, unattuned to ill:
And of the dragon-race that Ares spared [1]
He as a scion grows, a native true,
E'en Melanippos; Ares soon will test
His valour in the hazard of the die:
And kindred Justice sends him forth to war,
For her that bore him foeman's spear to check.

STROPH. I.

Chor. May the Gods grant my champion good success!
For justly he goes forth
For this our State to fight;
But yet I quake with fear
To see the deaths of those who die for friends.

Mess. Yea, may the Gods give good success to him!
The Electra gates have fallen to Capaneus,
A second giant, taller far than he
Just named, with boast above a mortal's bounds;

1 The older families of Thebes boasted that they sprang from the survivors of the Sparti, who, sprung from the Dragon's teeth, waged deadly war against each other, till all but five were slain. The later settlers, who were said to have come with Cadmos, stood to these as the "greater" to the "lesser *gentes*" at Rome.

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And dread his threats against our towers, O Fortune,
Turn them aside! for whether God doth will,
Or willeth not, he says that he will sack [1]
The city, nor shall e'en the wrath of Zeus
On the plain swooping, turn him from his will;
And the dread lightnings and hot thunderbolts
He likens to the heat of noon-day sun.
And his device, the naked form of one
Who bears a torch; and bright the fire shines forth,
And in gold characters he speaks the words,
"THE CITY I WILL BURN." Against this man
Send forth . . . . . but who will meet him in the fight?
Who, without fear, await this warrior proud?

Eteoc. Herein too, profit upon profit comes;
And 'gainst the vain and boastful thoughts of men,
Their tongue itself is found accuser true.
Threatening, equipped for work is Capaneus,
Scorning the Gods: and giving speech full play,
And in wild joy, though mortal, vents at Zeus,
High in the heavens, loud-spoken foaming words.
And well I trust on him shall rightly come
Fire-bearing thunder, nothing likened then
To heat of noon-day sun. And so 'gainst him,
Though very bold of speech, a man is set
Of fiery temper, Polyphontes strong,
A trusty bulwark, by the loving will

[1] So in the *Antigone* of Sophocles, (v. 134,) Capaneus appears as the special representative of boastful, reckless impiety.

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Of guardian Artemis[1] and other Gods.
Describe another, placed at other gates.

ANTISTROPH. I.

Chor. A curse on him who 'gainst our city boasts!
May thunder smite him down
Before he force his way
Into my home, and drive me
With haughty spear from maidens' dwelling-place!
Mess. And now I 'll tell of him who by the gates,
Stands next; for to Eteocles, as third,
To march his cohort to Neïstian gates,
Leaped the third lot from upturned brazen helm:
And he his mares, in head-gear snorting, whirls,
Full eager e'en to die at those same gates;
Their whistling nozzles of barbaric mode,
Are filled with loud blast of the panting nostrils.[2]
In no poor fashion is his shield devised;
A full-armed warrior climbs a ladder's rungs,
And mounts his foeman's towers as bent to sack;
And he too cries, in words of written speech,
"NOT EVEN ARES FROM THE TOWERS SHALL DRIVE ME."
Send thou against him some defender true,
To ward the yoke of bondage from our state.
Eteoc. Such would I send now; by good luck, indeed
He has been sent, his vaunting in his deeds,

[1] Artemis, as one of the special Deities to whom Thebes was consecrated.
[2] Apparently an Asiatic invention, to increase the terror of an attack of war-chariots.

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Megareus, Creon's son, who claims descent
From those as Sparti known, and not by noise
Of neighings loud of warlike steeds dismayed,
Will he the gates abandon, but in death
Will pay our land his nurture's debt in full,[1]
Or taking two men, and a town to boot,
(That on the shield) will deck his father's house
With those his trophies. Of another tell
The bragging tale, nor grudge thy words to me.

STROPH. II.

Chor. Him I wish good success,
O guardian of my home, and for his foes
All ill success I pray;
And since against our land their haughty words
With maddened soul they speak,
May Zeus, the sovran judge,
With fiery, hot displeasure look on them!

Mess. Another stands as fourth at gates hard by,
Onca-Athenà's, with a shout of war,
Hippomedon's great form and massive limbs;
And as he whirled his orb, his vast shield's disk,
I shuddered; yea, no idle words I speak.
No cheap and common draughtsman sure was he
Who wrought this cunning ensign on his shield:

[1] The phrase and thought were almost proverbial in Athens. Men, as citizens, were thought of as fed at a common table, bound to contribute their gifts to the common stock. When they offered up their lives in battle, they were giving, as Pericles says, (Thucyd. ii. 43,) their noblest "contribution," paying in full their subscription to the society of which they were members.

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Typhon emitting from his lips hot blast
Of darkling smoke, the flickering twin of fire:
And round the belly of the hollow shield
A rim was made with wreaths of twisted snakes.
And he too shouts his war-cry, and in frenzy,
As man possessed by Ares, hastes to battle,
Like Thyiad, darting terror from his eyes.[1]
'Gainst such a hero's might we well may guard;
Already at the gates men vaunt our flight.

Eteoc. First, the great Onca-Pallas, dwelling nigh
Our city's gates, and hating man's bold pride,
Shall ward him from her nestlings like a snake
Of venom dread; and next Hyperbios,
The stalwart son of Œnops, has been chosen,
A hero 'gainst this hero, willing found
To try his destiny at Fortune's hest.
No fault has he in form, or heart, or arms;
And Hermes with good reason pairs them off;
For man with man will fight as enemy,
And on their shields they 'll bring opposing Gods;
For this man beareth Typhon, breathing fire,
And on Hyperbios' shield sits father Zeus,
Full firm, with burning thunderbolt in hand;
And never yet has man seen Zeus, I trow,
O'ercome. Such then the favour of the Gods,
We with the winners, they with losers are:[2]

[1] Thyiad, another name for the Mænads, the frenzied attendants on Dionysos.

[2] *Sc.*, in the legends of Typhon, not he, but Zeus, had proved the con-

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Good reason then the rivals so should fare,
If Zeus than Typhon stronger be in fight,
And to Hyperbios, Zeus will saviour prove,
As that device upon his shield presents him.

ANTISTROPH. II.

Chor. Now do I trust that he
Who bears upon his shield the hated form
Of Power whom Earth doth shroud,
Antagonist to Zeus, unloved by men
And by the ageless Gods,
Before those gates of ours
To his own hurt may dash his haughty head.

Mess. So may it be! And now the fifth I tell,
Who the fifth gates, the Northern, occupies,
Hard by Amphion's tomb, the son of Zeus;
And by his spear he swears, (which he is bold
To honour more than God or his own eyes,)
That he will sack the fort of the Cadmeians
With that spear's might. So speaks the offspring fair
Of mother mountain-bred, a stripling hero;
And the soft down is creeping o'er his cheeks,
Youth's growth, and hair that floweth full and thick;
And he with soul, not maiden's like his name,[1]
But stern, with flashing eye, is standing there.
Nor stands he at the gate without a vaunt;

queror. The warrior, therefore, who chose Typhon for his badge was identifying himself with the losing, not the winning side.

[1] The name, as we are told in v. 542, is Parthenopæos, the maiden-faced.

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For on his brass-wrought buckler, strong defence,
Full-orbed, his body guarding, he the shame
Of this our city bears, the ravenous Sphinx,
With rivets fixed, all burnished and embossed;[1]
And under her she holdeth a Cadmeian,
That so on him most arrows might be shot.
No chance that he will fight a peddling fight,
Nor shame the long, long journey he hath come,
Parthenopæos, in Arcadia born:
This man did Argos welcome as a guest,
And now he pays her for her goodly rearing,
And threatens these our towers with . . . God avert it!

Eteoc. May the Gods give them what they plan 'gainst us!

Then they, with those their godless boastings high,
Would perish shamefully and utterly.
And for this man of Arcady thou tell'st of,
We have a man who boasts not, but his hand
Sees the right thing to do;—Actôr, of him
I named but now the brother,—who no tongue
Divorced from deeds will ever let within
Our gates, to spread and multiply our ills,
Nor him who bears upon his foeman's shield
The image of the hateful venomed beast;
But she without shall blame him as he tries

[1] The Sphinx, besides its general character as an emblem of terror, had, of course a special meaning as directed to the Thebans. The warrior who bore it threatened to renew the old days when the monster whom Œdipus had overcome had laid waste their city.

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To take her in, when she beneath our walls
Gets sorely bruised and battered.[1] And herein,
If the Gods will, I prophet true shall prove.

STROPH. III.

Chor. His words thrill through my breast;
My hair stands all on end,
To hear the boastings great
Of those who speak great things
Unholy. May the Gods
Destroy them in our land!

Mess. A sixth I tell of, one of noblest mood,
Amphiaraos, seer and warrior famed;
He, stationed at the Homoloian gates,
Reproves the warrior Tydeus with sharp words
As 'murderer,' and 'troubler of the state,'[2]
'To Argos teacher of all direst ills,'
'Erinnys' sumpnour,'[3] 'murder's minister,'
Whose counsels led Adrastos to these ills.
* And at thy brother Polyneikes glancing
With eyes uplifted for his father's fate,
And ending, twice he syllabled his name,[4]

[1] *Sc.*, the Sphinx on his shield will not be allowed to enter the city. It will only serve as a mark, attracting men to attack both it and the warrior who bears it.

[2] The quarrel between Tydeus and the seer Amphiaraos had been already touched upon.

[3] I have used the old English word to express a term of like technical use in Athenian law processes. As the "sumpnour" called witnesses or parties to a suit into court, so Tydeus had summoned the Erinnys to do her work of destruction.

[4] *Sc.*, so pronounced his name as to emphasize the significance of its two

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And called him, and thus speaketh with his lips :—
" A goodly deed, and pleasant to the Gods,
Noble for after age to hear and tell,
Thy father's city and thy country's Gods
To waste through might of mercenary host !
And how shall Justice stay thy mother's tears ?[1]
And how, when conquered, shall thy fatherland,
Laid waste, become a true ally to thee ?
As for myself, I shall that land make rich,[2]
A prophet buried in a foeman's soil :
To arms ! I look for no inglorious death."
So spake the prophet, bearing full-orbed shield
Wrought all of bronze, no ensign on that orb.
He wishes to be just, and not to seem,[3]
Reaping full harvest from his soul's deep furrows,
Whence ever new and noble counsels spring.
I bid thee send defenders wise and brave
Against him. Dread is he who fears the Gods.

component parts, as indicating that he who bore it was a man of much contention.

[1] The words are obscure, but seem to refer to the badge of Polyneikes, the figure of Justice described in v. 643 as on his shield. How shall that Justice, the seer asks, console Jocasta for her son's death ? Another rendering gives

" And how shall Justice quench a mother's life ?"

the "mother" being the country against which Polyneikes wars.

[2] The words had a twofold fulfilment, (1) in the burial of Amphiaraos, in Theban soil ; and (2) in the honour which accrued to Thebes after his death, through the fame of the oracle at his shrine.

[3] The passage cannot be passed over without noticing the old tradition (Plutarch. *Aristeid.* c. 3,) that when the actor uttered these words, he and the whole audience looked to Aristeides, surnamed the Just, as recognising that the words were true of him as they were of no one else. " Best," instead of " just," is, however, a very old various reading.

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Eteoc. Fie on the chance that brings the righteous man
Close-mated with the ungodly! In all deeds
Nought is there worse than evil fellowship,
A crop men should not reap. Death still is found
The harvest of the field of frenzied pride;
For either hath the godly man embarked
With sailors hot in insolence and guile,[1]
And perished with the race the Gods did loathe;
Or just himself, with citizens who wrong
The stranger and are heedless of the Gods,
Falling most justly in the selfsame snare,
By God's scourge smitten, shares the common doom.
And thus this seer I speak of, Œcleus' son,
Righteous, and wise, and good, and reverent,
A mighty prophet, mingling with the godless
*And men full bold of speech in reason's spite,
Who take long march, to reach a far-off city,[2]
By will of Zeus shall be hurled down with them.
And he, I trow, shall not e'en near the gates,
Not through faint-heart or any vice of mood;
But well he knows this war shall bring his death,
If any fruit is found in Loxias' words;
And He or holds his speech or speaks in season.

[1] If the former reference to Aristeides be admitted, we can scarcely avoid seeing in this passage an allusion to Themistocles, as one with whose reckless and democratic policy it was dangerous for the more conservative leader to associate himself.

[2] The far-off city, not of Thebes, but Hades. In the legend of Thebes, the earth opened and swallowed up Amphiaraos, as in 583.

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Yet against him the hero Lasthenes,
A foe of strangers, at the gates we 'll set;
Old is his mind, his body in its prime,
His eye swift-footed, and his hand not slow
To grasp the spear from 'neath the shield laid bare:[1] 630
'Tis by God's gift that men must win success.

ANTISTROPH. III.

Chor. Hear, O ye Gods! our prayers,
Our just entreaties grant,
That so our State be blest.
Turn ye the toils of war
Upon the invading host.
Outside the walls may Zeus
With thunder smite them low!

Mess. The seventh chief then who at the seventh gate stands,
Thine own, own brother, I will speak of now,
What curses on our State he pours, and prays 639
That he the towers ascending, and proclaimed
By herald's voice to all the territory,
And shouting out the captor's pæan-cry,
May so fight with thee, slay, and with thee die;
Or driving thee alive, who did'st him wrong,
May on thee vengeance wreak the selfsame way.
So clamours he, and bids his father's Gods,
His country's guardians, look upon his prayers,

[1] The short spear was usually carried under the shelter of the shield; when brought into action, it was of course laid bare.

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[And grant them all. So Polyneikes speaks,]
And he a new and well-wrought shield doth bear,
And twofold sign upon it riveted;
For there a woman with a stately tread
Leads one who seems a warrior wrought in gold:
Justice she calls herself, and thus she speaks:
"I WILL BRING BACK THIS MAN, AND HE SHALL HAVE
THE CITY AND HIS FATHER'S DWELLING-PLACE.
Such are the signs and mottoes of those men;
And thou, know well whom thou dost mean to send:
So thou shalt never blame my heraldings;
And thou thyself know how to steer the State.
Eteoc. O frenzy-stricken, hated sore of Gods!
O woe-fraught race (my race!) of Œdipus!
Ah me! my father's curse is now fulfilled;
But neither is it meet to weep or wail,
Lest cry more grievous on the issue come.
Of Polyneikes, name and omen true,
We soon shall know what way his badge shall end,
Whether his gold-wrought letters shall restore him,
His shield's great swelling words with frenzied soul;
But if great Justice, Zeus's virgin child,
Ruled o'er his words and acts, this might have been.
But neither when he left the womb's great darkness,
Nor in his youth, nor yet in ripening age,
Nor when his beard was gathered on his chin,
Did Justice count him meet for fellowship;
Nor do I think that she befriends him now

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In this great outrage on his father's land.
Yea, justly Justice would as falsely named
Be known, if she with one all-daring joined.
In this I trust, and I myself will face him:
Who else could claim a greater right than I?
Brother with brother fighting, king with king,
And foe with foe, I'll stand. Come, quickly fetch
My greaves that guard against the spear and stones.
Chor. Nay, dearest friend, thou son of Œdipus,
Be ye not like to him with that ill name:
It is enough Cadmeian men should fight
Against the Argives. That blood may be cleansed;
But death so murderous of two brothers born,
This is pollution never waxing old.
Eteoc. If a man must bear evil, let him still
Be without shame—sole profit that in death.
[No glory comes of base and evil deeds.]
Chor. What dost thou crave, my son? Let no ill fate,
Frenzied and hot for war,
Carry thee headlong on;
Check the first onset of an evil lust.
Eteoc. Since God so hotly urges on the matter,
Let all of Laios' race whom Phœbos hates,
Drift with the breeze upon Cokytos' wave.
Chor. An over-fierce and passionate desire
Stirs thee, and pricks thee on
To work an evil deed
Of guilt, of blood thy hand should never shed.

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Eteoc. Nay, my dear father's curse, in full-grown hate,
Dwells on dry eyes that cannot shed a tear,
And speaks of gain before the after-doom.

Chor. But be not thou urged on. The coward's name
Shall not be thine, for thou
Hast ordered well thy life.
Dark-robed Erinnys enters not the house,
When at men's hands the Gods
Accept their sacrifice.

Eteoc. As for the Gods, they scorned us long ago,
And smile upon the offering of our deaths;
Why then on death-doom fawn that it may spare?

Chor. Nay do it now, while yet 'tis in thy power;[1]
Perchance may fortune shift
With tardy change of mood,
And come with spirit less implacable:
At present fierce and hot
She waxeth in her rage.

Eteoc. Yea, fierce and hot the Curse of Œdipus;
And all too true the visions of the night,
My father's treasured store distributing.

Chor. Yield to us women, though thou lov'st us not.

Eteoc. Speak then what may be done, and be not long.

Chor. Tread not the path that to the seventh gate leads.

[1] Perhaps "since death is nigh at hand."

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Eteoc. Thou shalt not blunt my sharpened edge with words.

Chor. And yet this victory in defeat God honours.[1]

Eteoc. That word a warrior must not tolerate.

Chor. But dost thou haste to shed thy brother's blood?

Eteoc. If the Gods will, he shall not 'scape from death.

[*Exeunt* ETEOCLES, Scout, *and* Captains.

STROPH. I.

Chor. I fear her might who doth this whole house wreck,
The Goddess unlike Gods,
The prophetess of evil all too true,
The Erinnys of thy father's imprecations,
Lest she fulfil the curse,
O'er-wrathful, frenzy-fraught,
The Curse of Œdipus,
Laying his children low.
This Strife doth urge her on.

ANTISTROPH. I.

And now a stranger doth divide the lots,
The Chalyb,[2] from the Skythians emigrant,

[1] The Chorus means that if Eteocles would allow himself to be overcome in this contest of his wishes with their prayers, the Gods would honour that defeat as if it were indeed a victory. He makes answer that the very thought of being overcome implied in the word "defeat" in anything is one which the true warrior cannot bear.

[2] The 'Chalyb stranger' is the sword, thought of as taking its name from the Skythian tribe of the Chalybes, between Colchis and Armenia, and passing through the Thrakians into Greece.

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The stern distributor of heaped-up wealth,
The iron that hath assigned them just so much
Of land as theirs, no more,
As may suffice for them
As grave when they shall fall,
Without or part or lot
In the broad-spreading plains.

STROPH. II.

And when the hands of each
The other's blood have shed,
And the earth's dust shall drink
The black and clotted gore,
Who then can purify?
Who cleanse them from the guilt?
Ah me! O sorrows new,
That mingle with the old woes of our house!

ANTISTROPH. II.

I tell the ancient tale
Of sin that brought swift doom;
Till the third age it waits,
Since Laios, heeding not
Apollo's oracle,
(Though spoken thrice to him
In Pythia's central shrine,)
That dying childless, he should save the State.

STROPH. III.

But he by those he loved full rashly swayed,
Doom for himself begat,

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His murderer Œdipus,
Who dared to sow in field
Unholy, whence he sprang,
A root of blood-flecked woe :
Madness together brought
Bridegroom and bride accursed.

ANTISTROPH. III.

And now the sea of evils pours its flood :
This falling, others rise ;
As with a triple crest.
Round the State's stern they roar :
And but a bulwark slight,
A tower in breadth defends :
And lest the city fall
With its two kings I fear.

STROPH. IV.

*And that atonement of the ancient curse
Receives fulfilment now ;[1]
*And though fulfilled, the evils pass not by.
E'en so the wealth of men of enterprise,
When heaped up in excess,
Leads but to cargo from the stern thrown out.[2]

ANTISTROPH. IV.

For whom of mortals did the Gods so praise,

[1] The two brothers, *i.e.*, are set at one again, but it is not in the bonds of friendship, but in those of death.

[2] The image meets us again in *Agam.* 980. Here the thought is, that a man too prosperous is like a ship too heavily freighted. He must part with a portion of his possession in order to save the rest. Not to part with them leads, when the storm rages, to an enforced abandonment and utter loss.

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And fellow-worshippers, 770
*And race of those who feed their flocks and herds,[1]
As much as then they honoured Œdipus,
Who from our country's bounds
Had driven the monster, murderess of men?

STROPH. V.

And when too late he knew,
Ah, miserable man! his wedlock dire,
Vexed sore with that dread shame,
With heart to madness driven,
He wrought a twofold ill,
And with the hand that smote his father's life 781
*Blinded the eyes that might his sons have seen.

ANTISTROPH. V.

And with a mind provoked
By nurture scant, he at his sons did hurl[2]
His curses dire and dark,
(Ah, bitter curses those!)
That they with spear in hand
Should one day share their father's wealth; and I
Fear lest the swift Erinnys should fulfil them.

[1] Another reading gives—
"And race of those who crowd the Agora."

[2] This seems to have been one form of the legends as to the cause of the curse which Œdipus had launched upon his sons. An alternative rendering is—

And with a mind enraged
At thought of what they were whom he had reared,
He at his sons did hurl
His curses dire and dark.

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Enter Messenger.

Mess. Be of good cheer, ye maidens, mother-reared;
Our city has escaped the yoke of bondage,
The boasts of mighty men are fallen low,
And this our city in calm waters floats,
And though the waves lash, springs not any leak.
Our fortress still holds out, and we did guard
The gates with champions who redeemed their pledge.
In the six gateways almost all goes well,
But the seventh gate did king Apollo choose,[1]
Seventh mighty chief, avenging Laios' want
Of counsel on the sons of Œdipus.

Chor. What new disaster happens to our city?[2]

Mess. The city's saved, but both the royal brothers, ...

Chor. Who? and what of them? I'm distraught with fear.

Mess. Be calm, and hear: the sons of Œdipus, ...

Chor. Oh wretched me! a prophet I of ill!

Mess. Slain by each other, earth has drunk their blood.

Chor. Came they to that? 'Tis dire; yet tell it me.

Mess. Too true, by brother's hand our chiefs are slain.

Chor. What, did the brother's hands the brother slay?

[1] *Sc.*, when Eteocles fell, Apollo took his place at the seventh gate, and turned the tide of war in favour of the Thebans.

[2] I follow in this dialogue the arrangement which Paley adopts from Hermann.

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Mess. No doubt is there that they are laid in dust.

Chor. Thus was there then a common fate for both?

Mess. * Yea, it lays low the whole ill-fated race.

Chor. These things give cause for gladness and for tears,

Seeing that our city prospers, and our lords,
The generals twain, with well-wrought Skythian steel,
Have shared between them all their store of goods,
And now shall have their portion in a grave,
Borne on, as spake their father's grievous curse.[1]

Mess. The city's saved, but of the brother-kings
The earth has drunk the blood, each slain by each.

Chor. Great Zeus! and ye, O Gods!
Guardians of this our town,
Who save in very deed
The towers of Cadmos old,
Shall I rejoice and shout
Over the happy chance
That frees our state from harm;
Or weep that ill-starred pair,
The war-chiefs, childless and most miserable,
Who, true to that ill name
Of Polyneikes, died in impious mood,
Contending over-much?

STROPH.

Oh dark, and all too true

[1] There seems an intentional ambiguity. They are "borne on, but it is as the corpses of the dead are borne to the sepulchre.

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That curse of Œdipus and all his race,[1]
An evil chill is falling on my heart,
And, like a Thyiad wild,
Over his grave I sing a dirge of grief,
Hearing the dead have died by evil fate,
Each in foul bloodshed steeped;
Ah me! Ill-omened is the spear's accord.[2]

ANTISTROPH.

It hath wrought out its end,
And hath not failed, that prayer the father poured;
And Laios' reckless counsels work till now:
I fear me for the State;
The oracles have not yet lost their edge;
O men of many sorrows, ye have wrought
This deed incredible,
And woes have come for wailing beyond speech.

[*As the Chorus are speaking, the bodies of* ETEOCLES *and* POLYNEIKES *are brought in solemn procession by* Theban citizens.

EPODE.

Yea, it is all too clear,
The herald's tale of woe comes full in sight;
Twofold our cares, twin evils born of pride,
Murderous, with double doom,
Wrought unto full completeness are these woes.

[1] Not here the curse uttered by Œdipus, but that which rested on him and all his kin. There is possibly an allusion to the curse with which Pelops is said to have cursed Laios when he stole his son Chrysippos. Comp. v. 837.

[2] As in v. 763, we read of the brothers as made one in death, so now of the concord which is wrought out by conflict, the concord, *i.e.*, of the grave.

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What shall I say? What else
Are they than woes that make this house their home?
But oh! my friends, ply, ply with prosperous gale,
That even stroke of hands upon your head,[1]
In funeral order, such as evermore
O'er Acheron sends on
* That bark of state, dark-rigged, accursed its voyage,
Which nor Apollo visits, nor the sun,[2]
On to the shore unseen,
The resting-place of all.

[ISMENE *and* ANTIGONE *are seen approaching in mourning garments, followed by a procession of women wailing and lamenting.*

For see, they come to bitter deed called forth,
Ismene and the maid Antigone,
To wail their brothers' fall;
With little doubt I deem,
That they will pour from fond, deep-bosomed breasts
A worthy strain of grief:
But it is meet that we,

[1] The Chorus are called on to change their character, and to pass from the attitude of suppliants, with outstretched arms, to that of mourners at a funeral, beating on their breasts. But, perhaps, the call is addressed to the mourners who are seen approaching with Ismene and Antigone.

[2] The thought is drawn from the *theoris* or pilgrim-ship, which went with snow-white sails, and accompanied by joyful pæans, on a solemn mission from Athens to Delos. In contrast with this type of joy, Æschylos draws the picture of the boat of Charon, which passes over the gloomy pool accompanied by the sighs and gestures of bitter lamentation. So, in the old Attic legend, the ship that annually carried seven youths and maidens to the Minotaur of Crete was conspicuous for its black sails.

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Before we hear their cry,
Should utter the harsh hymn Erinnys loves,
And sing to Hades dark
The Pæan of distress.
O ye, most evil-fated in your kin,
Of all who gird their robes with maiden's band,
I weep and wail, and feigning know I none,
That I should fail to speak
My sorrow from my heart.

STROPH. I.

Semi-Chor. A. Alas! alas!
Men of stern mood, who would not list to friends,
Unwearied in all ills,
Seizing your father's house, O wretched ones!
With the spear's murderous point.

Semi-Chor. B. Yea, wretched they who found a wretched doom,
With havoc of the house.

ANTISTROPH. I.

Semi-Chor. A. Alas! alas!
Ye who laid low the ancient walls of home,
Now on sole sway, ill won,
Your eyes have looked, and ye at last are brought
To concord by the sword.

Semi-Chor. B. Yea, of a truth, the curse of Œdipus
Erinnys dread fulfils.

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STROPH. II.

Semi-Chor. A. Yea, smitten through the heart,
Smitten through sides where flowed the blood of brothers.
Ah me! ye doomed of God!
Ah me! the curses dire
Of deaths ye met with each at other's hands!

Semi-Chor. B. Thou tell'st of men death-smitten through and through,
Both in their homes and lives,
With wrath beyond all speech,
And doom of discord fell,
That sprang from out the curse their father spake.

ANTISTROPH. II.

Semi-Chor. A. Yea, through the city runs
A wailing cry. The high towers wail aloud;
Wails all the plain that loves her heroes well;
And to their children's sons
The wealth will go for which
The strife of those ill-starred ones brought forth death.

Semi-Chor. B. Quick to resent, they shared their fortune so,
That each like portion won;
* Nor can their friends regard
Their umpire without blame;
Nor is our voice in thanks to Ares raised.

STROPH. III.

Semi-Chor. A. By the sword smitten low,

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Thus are they now;
By the sword smitten low,
There wait them . . . Nay,
Doth one perchance ask what?
Shares in the grave where all their fathers sleep.

Semi-Chor. B. * The sorrow of the house is borne to them
By my heart-rending wail.
Mine own the cries I pour;
Mine own the woes I weep;
Bitter and joyless, shedding truest tears
From heart that faileth, even as they fall,
For these two kingly chiefs.

ANTISTROPH. III.

Semi-Chor. A. Yes; one may say of them,
That wretched pair,
That they much ill have wrought
To their own host;
Yea, and to alien ranks
Of many nations fallen in the fray.

Semi-Chor. B. Ah! miserable she who bare those twain,
'Bove all of women born
Who boast a mother's name!
Taking her son as spouse,
She bare them, and they both,
By mutual slaughter and by brothers' hands,
Have found their end in death.

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STROPH. IV.

Semi-Chor. A. Yes; of the same womb born, and doomèd both,
* Not as friends part, they fell,
In strife to madness pushed
In this their quarrel's end.
Semi-Chor. B. The quarrel now is hushed,
And in the ensanguined earth their lives are blent;
Full near in blood are they.
Stern umpire of their strifes
Has been the stranger from beyond the sea,[1]
Fresh from the furnace, keen and sharpened steel.
Stern, too, is Ares found,
Divider of their goods,
Making their father's curses all too true.

ANTISTROPH. IV.

Semi-Chor. A. At last they have their share, ah, wretched ones!
Of burdens sent from God.
And now, beneath them lies
A boundless wealth of——earth.
Semi-Chor. B. O ye who your own race
Have made to burgeon out with many woes!
Over the end at last
The brood of Curses raise
Their shrill, sharp cry of lamentation loud,

[1] The 'Chalyb,' or iron sword, which the Hellenes had imported from the Skythians. Comp. vv. 70, 86.

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The race being put to universal flight;
And Atè's trophy stands,
Where in the gates they fell;
And Fate, now both are conquered, rests at last.

Enter ANTIGONE *and* ISMENE, *followed by mourning maidens.*[1]

Ant. Thou wast smitten, and thou smotest.
Ism. Thou did'st slaughter, and wast slaughtered.
Ant. Thou with spear to death did'st smite him.
Ism. Thou with spear to death wast smitten.
Ant. Oh, the woe of all your labours!
Ism. Oh, the woe of all ye suffered!
Ant. Pour the cry of lamentation.
Ism. Pour the tears of bitter weeping.
Ant. There in death thou liest prostrate.
Ism. Having wrought a great destruction.

STROPH.

Ant. Ah! my mind is crazed with wailing.
Ism. Yea, my heart within me groaneth.
Ant. Thou for whom the city weepeth!

[1] The lyrical, operatic character of Greek tragedies has to be borne in mind as we read passages like that which follows. They were not meant to be *read*. Uttered in a passionate recitative, accompanied by expressive action, they probably formed a very effective element in the actual representation of the tragedy. We may look on it as the only extant specimen of the kind of wailing which was characteristic of Eastern burials, and which was slowly passing away in Greece under the influence of a higher culture. The feeling that there was something barbaric in these outward displays of grief, showed itself alike in the legislation of Solon, and the eloquence of Pericles.

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Ism. Thou too, doomed to all ill-fortune!
Ant. By a loved hand thou hast perished.
Ism. And a loved form thou hast slaughtered.
Ant. Double woes are ours to tell off.
Ism. Double woes too ours to look on.
Ant. * Twofold sorrows from near kindred.
Ism. * Sisters we by brothers standing.
Ant. Terrible are they to tell of.
Ism. Terrible are they to look on.
Chor. Ah me, thou Destiny,
Giver of evil gifts, and working woe,
And thou dread spectral form of Œdipus,
And swarth Erinnys too,
A mighty one art thou.

ANTISTROPHE.

Ant. Ah me! ah me! woes dread to look on . . . .
Ism. Ye showed to me, returned from exile.
Ant. Not, when he had slain, returned he.
Ism. Nay, he, saved from exile, perished.
Ant. Yea, I trow too well, he perished.
Ism. And his brother, too, he murdered.
Ant. Woeful, piteous, are those brothers!
Ism. Woeful, piteous, all they suffered!
Ant. Woes of kindred wrath enkindling.
Ism. Saturate with threefold horrors.
Ant. Terrible are they to tell off.
Ism. Terrible are they to look on.
Chor. Ah me, thou Destiny,

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Giver of evil gifts, and stern of soul,
And thou dread spectral form of Œdipus,
And swarth Erinnys too,
A mighty one art thou.

EPODE.

Ant. Thou, then, by full trial knowest . . .
Ism. Thou, too, no whit later learning, . . .
Ant. When thou cam'st back to this city.[1] . . .
Ism. Rival to our chief in warfare.
Ant. Woe, alas! for all our troubles!
Ism. Woe, alas! for all our evils!
Ant. Evils fallen on our houses!
Ism. Evils fallen on our country!
Ant. And on me before all others. . . .
Ism. And to me the future waiting. . . .
Ant. Woe for those two brothers luckless!
Ism. King Eteocles, our leader!
Ant. Oh before all others wretched!
Ism. . . . . . .
Ant. Ah, by Atè frenzy-stricken!
Ism. Ah, where now shall they be buried?
Ant. There where grave is highest honour.
Ism. Ah, the woe my father wedded!

Enter a Herald.

Her. 'Tis mine the judgment and decrees to publish
Of this Cadmeian city's counsellors:

[1] Here, and perhaps throughout, we must think of Antigone as addressing and looking on the corpse of Polyneikes, Ismene on that of Eteocles.

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It is decreed Eteocles to honour,
For his goodwill towards this land of ours,
With seemly burial, such as friend may claim;
For warding off our foes he courted death;
Pure as regards his country's holy things,
Blameless he died where death the young beseems;
This then I 'm ordered to proclaim of him.
But for his brother's, Polyneikes' corpse,
To cast it out unburied, prey for dogs,
As working havoc on Cadmeian's land,
Unless some God had hindered by the spear
Of this our prince;[1] and he, though dead, shall gain
The curse of all his father's Gods, whom he
[*Pointing to* POLYNEIKES.
With alien lords dishonouring, tried to take
Our city. Him by ravenous birds interred
Ingloriously, they sentence to receive
His full deserts; and none may take in hand
To heap up there a tomb, nor honour him
With shrill-voiced wailings, but he still must lie,
Without the meed of burial by his friends.
So do the high Cadmeian powers decree.
Ant. And I those rulers of Cadmeians tell,[2]

[1] Perhaps,

"Unless some God had stood against the spear
This chief did wield."

[2] The speech of Antigone becomes the starting-point, in the hands of Sophocles, of the noblest of his tragedies. The denial of burial, it will be remembered, was looked on as not merely an indignity and outrage against the feelings of the living, but as depriving the souls of the dead of all rest and peace. As such it was the punishment of parricides and traitors.

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That if no other care to bury him,
I will inter him, facing all the risk,
Burying my brother: nor am I ashamed
To thwart the State in rank disloyalty;
Strange power there is in ties of blood, that we,
Born of woe-laden mother, sire ill-starred,
Are bound by: therefore of thy full free-will,
Share thou, my soul, in guilt he did not will,
Thou living, he being dead, with sister's heart.
And this I say, no wolves with ravening maws
Shall tear his flesh—No! no! let none think that!
For tomb and burial I will scheme for him,
Though I be but weak woman, bringing earth
Within my byssine raiment's fold, and so
Myself will bury him; let no man think
(I say 't again) aught else. Take heart, my soul!
There shall not fail the means effectual.

Her. I bid thee not defy the State in this.

Ant. I bid thee not proclaim vain words to me.

Her. Stern is the people now with victory flushed.

Ant. Stern let them be, he shall not tombless lie.

Her. And wilt thou honour whom the State doth loathe?

Ant. * Long since the Gods have given him honour due.[1]

[1] The words are obscure enough, the point lying, it may be, in their ambiguity. Antigone here, as in the tragedy of Sophocles, pleads that the Gods have pardoned; they still command and love the reverence for the dead, which she is about to show. The herald catches up her words and

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Her. It was not so till he this land attacked.

Ant. He, suffering evil, evil would repay.

Her. Not against one his arms were turned, but all.

Ant. Strife is the last of Gods to end disputes:
Him I will bury; talk no more of it.

Her. Choose for thyself then, I forbid the deed.

Chor. Alas! alas! alas!
Ye haughty boasters, race-destroying,
Now Fates and now Erinnyes, smiting
The sons of Œdipus, ye slew them,
With a root-and-branch destruction.
What shall I then do, what suffer?
What shall I devise in counsel?
How should I dare nor to weep thee,
Nor escort thee to the burial?
But I tremble and I shrink from
All the terrors which they threatened,
They who are my fellow-townsmen.
Many mourners thou (*looking to the bier of Eteocles*) shalt meet with;
But he, lost one, unlamented,
With his sister's wailing only,
Passeth. Who with this complieth?

Semi-Chor. A. Let the city doom or not doom
Those who weep for Polyneikes;

takes them in another sense, as though all the honour he had met with from the Gods had been defeat, and death, and shame, as the reward of his sacrilege.

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We will go, and we will bury,
Maidens we in sad procession ;
For the woe to all is common,
And our State with voice uncertain,
Of the claims of Right and Justice,
Hither, thither, shifts its praises.

Semi-Chor. B. We will thus, our chief attending,
Speak, as speaks the State, our praises :
Of the claims of Right and Justice ; [1]
For next those the Blessed Rulers,
And the strength of Zeus, he chiefly
Saved the city of Cadmeians
From the doom of fell destruction,
From the doom of whelming utter,
In the flood of alien warriors.

[*Exeunt* ANTIGONE *and Semi-Chorus A., following the corpse of* POLYNEIKES ; ISMENE *and Semi-Chorus B. that of* ETEOCLES.

[1] The words are probably a protest against the changeableness of the Athenian *demos*, as seen especially in their treatment of Aristeides.

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PROMETHEUS BOUND.

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ARGUMENT.

In the old time, when Cronos was sovereign of the Gods, Zeus, whom he had begotten, rose up against him, and the Gods were divided in their counsels, some, the Titans chiefly, siding with the father, and some with the son. And Prometheus, the son of Earth or Themis, though one of the Titans, supported Zeus, as did also Okeanos, and by his counsels Zeus obtained the victory, and Cronos was chained in Tartaros, and the Titans buried under mountains, or kept in bonds in Hades. And then Prometheus, seeing the miseries of the race of men, of whom Zeus took little heed, stole the fire which till then had belonged to none but Hephæstos and was used only for the Gods, and gave it to mankind, and taught them many arts whereby their wretchedness was lessened. But Zeus being wroth with Prometheus for this deed, sent Hephæstos, with his two helpers, Strength and Force, to fetter him to a rock on Caucasos.

And in yet another story was the cruelty of the Gods made known. For Zeus loved Io, the daughter of Inachos, king of Argos, and she was haunted by visions of the night, telling her of his passion, and she told her father thereof. And Inachos, sending to the God at Delphi, was told to drive Io forth from her home. And Zeus gave her the horns of a cow, and Hera, who hated her because she was dear to Zeus, sent with her a gadfly that stung her, and gave her no rest, and drove her over many lands.

Note.—The play is believed to have been the second of a Trilogy, of which the first was Prometheus the Fire-giver, and the third Prometheus Unbound.

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Dramatis Personæ.

PROMETHEUS.

OKEANOS.

HEPHÆSTOS.

HERMES.

STRENGTH.

FORCE.

Chorus of Oceanæ Nymphs.

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PROMETHEUS BOUND.

SCENE.—Skythia, *on the heights of Caucasos. The Euxine seen in the distance.*

Enter HEPHÆSTOS, STRENGTH, *and* FORCE, *leading* PROMETHEUS *in chains.*[1]

Strength. Lo! to a plain, earth's boundary remote,
We now are come,—the tract as Skythian known,
A desert inaccessible: and now,
Hephæstos, it is thine to do the hests
The Father gave thee, to these lofty crags
To bind this crafty trickster fast in chains
Of adamantine bonds that none can break;
For he thy choice flower stealing, the bright stream
Of fire that all arts spring from, hath bestowed it

[1] The scene seems at first an exception to the early conventional rule, which forbade the introduction of a third actor on the Greek stage. But it has been noticed that (1.) Force does not speak, and (2.) Prometheus does not speak till Strength and Force have retired, and that it is therefore probable that the whole work of nailing is done on a lay figure or effigy of some kind, and that one of the two who had before taken part in the dialogue then speaks behind it in the character of Prometheus. So the same actor must have appeared in succession as Okeanos, Io, and Hermes.

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On mortal men. And so for fault like this
He now must pay the Gods due penalty,
That he may learn to bear the sovereign rule
Of Zeus, and cease from his philanthropy.
Heph. O Strength, and thou, O Force, the hest of Zeus,
As far as touches you, attains its end,
And nothing hinders. Yet my courage fails
To bind a God of mine own kin by force
To this bare rock where tempests wildly sweep;
And yet I needs must courage muster for it:
'Tis no slight thing the Father's words to scorn.
O thou of Themis [*to* PROMETHEUS] wise in counsel son,
Full deep of purpose, lo! against my will,[1]
I fetter thee against thy will with bonds
Of bronze that none can loose, to this lone height
Where thou shalt know nor voice nor face of man,
But scorching in the hot blaze of the sun,
Shalt lose thy skin's fair beauty. Thou shalt long
For starry-mantled night to hide day's sheen,
For sun to melt the rime of early dawn;
And evermore the weight of present ill

[1] Prometheus (*Forethought*) is the son of Themis (*Right*) the second occupant of the Pythian Oracle (*Eumen.* v. 2.) His sympathy with man leads him to impart the gift which raised them out of savage animal life, and for this Zeus, who appears throughout the play as a hard taskmaster, sentences him to fetters. Hephæstos, from whom this fire had been stolen, has a touch of pity for him. Strength, who comes as the servant, not of Hephæstos, but of Zeus himself, acts as such with merciless cruelty.

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Shall wear thee down. Unborn as yet is he
Who shall release thee: this the fate thou gain'st
As due reward for thy philanthropy.
For thou, a God not fearing wrath of Gods,
In thy transgression gav'st their power to men;
And therefore on this rock of little ease
Thou still shalt keep thy watch, nor lying down,
Nor knowing sleep, nor ever bending knee;
And many groans and wailings profitless
Thy lips shall utter; for the mind of Zeus
Remains inexorable. Who holds a power
But newly gained [1] is ever stern of mood.

Strength. Let be! Why linger in this idle pity?
Why dost not hate a God to Gods a foe,
Who gave thy choicest prize to mortal men?

Heph. Strange is the power of kin and intercourse.[2]

Strength. I own it; yet to slight the Father's words,
How may that be? Is not that fear the worse?

Heph. Still art thou ruthless, full of savagery.

Strength. There is no help in weeping over him:
Spend not thy toil on things that profit not.

Heph. O handicraft to me intolerable!

Strength. Why loath'st thou it? Of these thy present griefs
That craft of thine is not one whit the cause.

[1] The generalised statement refers to Zeus, as having but recently expelled Cronos from his throne in Heaven.

[2] Hephæstos, as the great fire-worker, had taught Prometheus to use the fire which he afterwards bestowed on men.

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Heph. And yet I would some other had that skill.

Strength. * All things bring toil except for Gods to reign;[1]

For none but Zeus can freedom call his own.

Heph. Lo, here I see the proof, and gainsay not.

Strength. Wilt thou not speed to fix the chains on him,

Lest He, the Father, see thee loitering here?

Heph. Well, here the handcuffs thou may'st see prepared.

Strength. In thine hands take him. Then with all thy might

Strike with thine hammer; nail him to the rocks.

Heph. The work goes on, I ween, and not in vain.

Strength. Strike harder, rivet, give no whit of ease:

A wondrous knack has he to find resource

Even where all might seem to baffle him.

Heph. Lo! this his arm is fixed inextricably.

Strength. Now rivet thou this other fast, that he

May learn, though sharp, that he than Zeus is duller.

Heph. No one but he could justly blame my work.

Strength. Now drive the stern jaw of the adamant wedge

Right through his chest with all the strength thou hast.

Heph. Ah me! Prometheus, for thy woes I groan.

Strength. Again, thou'rt loth, and for the foes of Zeus

[1] Perhaps, "All might is ours except o'er Gods to rule."

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Thou groanest: take good heed to it lest thou
Ere long with cause thyself commiserate.

Heph. Thou see'st a sight unsightly to our eyes.

Strength. I see this man obtaining his deserts:

Nay, cast thy breast-chains round about his ribs.

Heph. I must needs do it. Spare thine o'ermuch bidding;
Go thou below and rivet both his legs.[1]

Strength. Nay, I will bid thee, urge thee to thy work.

Heph. There, it is done, and that with no long toil.

Strength. Now with thy full power fix the galling fetters:
Thou hast a stern O'erlooker of thy work.

Heph. Thy tongue but utters words that match thy face.[2]

Strength. Choose thou the melting mood; but chide not me
For my self-will and wrath and ruthlessness.

Heph. Now let us go, his limbs are bound in chains.

Strength. Here then wax proud, and stealing what belongs
To the Gods, to mortals give it. What can they
Avail to rescue thee from these thy woes?

[1] The words indicate that the effigy of Prometheus, now nailed to the rock, was, as being that of a Titan, of colossal size.

[2] The touch is characteristic as showing that here, as in the *Eumenides*, Æschylos relied on the horribleness of the masks, as part of the machinery of his plays.

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Falsely the Gods have thee Prometheus called,
The God of Forethought: forethought thou dost need
To free thyself from this rare handiwork.

[*Exeunt* HEPHÆSTOS, STRENGTH, *and* FORCE, *leaving* PROMETHEUS *on the rock.*

Prom.[1] Thou firmament of God, and swift-winged winds,
Ye springs of rivers, and of ocean waves
Thou smile innumerous! Mother of us all,
O Earth, and Sun's all-seeing eye, behold,
I pray, what I a God from Gods endure.
Behold in what foul case
I for ten thousand years
Shall struggle in my woe,
In these unseemly chains.
Such doom the new-made Monarch of the Blest
Hath now devised for me.
Woe, woe! The present and th' oncoming pang
I wail, as I search out
The place and hour when end of all these ills
Shall dawn on me at last.
What say I? All too clearly I foresee
The things that come, and nought of pain shall be
By me unlooked for; but I needs must bear

[1] The silence of Prometheus up to this point was partly, as has been said, consequent on the conventional laws of the Greek drama, but it is also a touch of supreme insight into the heroic temper. In the presence of his torturers, the Titan will not utter even a groan. When they are gone, he appeals to the sympathy of Nature.

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My destiny as best I may, knowing well
The might resistless of Necessity.
And neither may I speak of this my fate,
Nor hold my peace. For I, poor I, through giving
Great gifts to mortal men, am prisoner made
In these fast fetters; yea, in fennel stalk[1]
I snatched the hidden spring of stolen fire,
Which is to men a teacher of all arts,
Their chief resource. And now this penalty
Of that offence I pay, fast riveted
In chains beneath the open firmament.
Ha! ha! What now?
What sound, what odour floats invisibly?[2]
Is it of God or man, or blending both?
And has one come to this remotest rock
To look upon my woes? Or what wills he?
Behold me bound, a God to evil doomed,
The foe of Zeus, and held
In hatred by all Gods

[1] The legend is from Hesiod, (*Theogon.* v. 567.) The fennel, or *narthex*, seems to have been a large umbelliferous plant, with a large stem filled with a sort of pith, which was used when dry as tinder. Stalks were carried as wands (the *thyrsi*) by the men and women who joined in Bacchanalian processions. In modern botany, the name is given to the plant which produces Asafœtida, and the stem of which, from its resinous character, would burn freely, and so connect itself with the Promethean myth. On the other hand, the Narthex Asafœtida is found at present only in Persia, Affghanistan, and the Punjaub.

[2] The ocean nymphs, like other divine ones, would be anointed with ambrosial unguents, and the odour would be wafted before them by the rustling of their wings. This too we may think of as part of the "stage effects" of the play.

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Who tread the courts of Zeus:
And this for my great love,
Too great, for mortal men.
Ah me! what rustling sounds
Hear I of birds not far?
With the light whirr of wings
The air re-echoeth:
All that draws nigh to me is cause of fear.[1]

Enter Chorus of Ocean Nymphs, *with wings, floating in the air.*[2]

Chor. Nay, fear thou nought: in love
All our array of wings,
With eager haste, hath come
To this high peak, full hardly gaining o'er
Our Father's mind and will;
And the swift-rushing breezes bore me on:
For lo! the echoing sound of blows on iron
Pierced to our cave's recess, and put to flight
My shamefast modesty,
And I in unshod haste, on winged car,
To thee rushed hitherward.

Prom. Ah me! ah me!
Offspring of Tethys blest with many a child,
Daughters of old Okeanos that rolls

[1] The words are not those of a vague terror only. The sufferer knows that his tormentor is to come to him before long on wings, and therefore the sound as of the flight of birds is full of terrors.

[2] By some stage mechanism the Chorus remains in the air till verse 280, when, at the request of Prometheus, they alight.

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Round all the earth with never-sleeping stream,
Behold ye me, and see
With what chains fettered fast,
I on the topmost crags of this ravine
Shall keep my sentry-post unenviable.
Chor. I see it, O Prometheus, and a mist
Of fear and full of tears comes o'er mine eyes,
Thy frame beholding thus,
Writhing on these high rocks
In adamantine ills.
New pilots now o'er high Olympos rule,
And with new-fashioned laws
Zeus reigns, down-trampling right,
And all the ancient powers He sweeps away.
Prom. Ah! would that 'neath the Earth, 'neath Hades too,
Home of the dead, far down to Tartaros
Unfathomable He in fetters fast
In wrath had hurled me down:
So neither had a God
Nor any other mocked at these my woes;
But now, the wretched plaything of the winds,
I suffer ills at which my foes rejoice.
Chor. Nay, which of all the Gods
Is so hard-hearted as to joy in this?
Who, Zeus excepted, doth not pity thee
In these thine ills? But He,
Ruthless, with soul unbent,

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Subdues the heavenly host, nor will He cease[1]
Until his heart be satiate with power,
Or some one seize with subtle stratagem
The might which seemed all conflict to defy.
Prom. Nay, of a truth, though put to evil shame,
These fetters round my hands,
The Ruler of the Gods
Shall yet have need of me, yes, e'en of me,
To tell the counsel new
That seeks to strip from him
His sceptre and his might of sovereignty.
In vain will He with words
Or suasion's honeyed charms
Sooth me, nor will I tell
Through fear of his stern threats,
Ere He shall set me free
From these my bonds, and pay,
Of his own choice, the debt
Of all these outrages.
Chor. Full rash art thou, and yield'st
In not a jot to bitterest form of woe;
Thou waxest free and reckless in thy speech:
But piercing fear hath stirred
My inmost soul to strife;

[1] Here, as throughout the play, the poet puts into the mouth of his *dramatis personæ* words which must have seemed to the devouter Athenians sacrilegious enough to call for an indictment before the Areiopagos. But the final play of the Trilogy came, we may believe, as the *Eumenides* did in its turn, as a reconciliation of the conflicting thoughts that rise in men's minds out of the seeming anomalies of the world.

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For I fear greatly touching thy distress,
As to what haven of these woes of thine
Thou now must steer: the son of Cronos hath
A heart full stern and stiff.
Prom. I know that Zeus is hard,
And keeps the Right supremely to himself;
But then, I know, He 'll be
Full pliant in his will,
When He is thus crushed down.
Then calming down his mood
Of hard and bitter wrath,
He 'll hasten unto me,
As I to him shall haste,
For friendship and for peace.
Chor. Hide it not from us, tell us all the tale;
For what offence Zeus, having seized thee thus,
So wantonly and bitterly insults thee:
If the tale hurt thee not, instruct thou us.
Prom. Painful are these things to me e'en to speak;
Painful is silence; everywhere is woe.
For when the high Gods fell on mood of wrath,
And hot debate of mutual strife was stirred,
Some wishing to hurl Cronos from his throne,
That Zeus, forsooth, might reign; while others strove
Earnest that Zeus might never rule the Gods:
Then I, full strongly seeking to persuade
The Titans, yea, the sons of Heaven and Earth,
Failed of my purpose. Scorning subtle arts,

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With counsels violent, they thought that they
By force would gain full easy mastery.
But then not once or twice my mother Themis
And Earth, one form though bearing many names,[1]
Had prophesied the future, how 'twould run,
That not by strength nor yet by violence,
But that the first in guile should gain the day.
And when I gave them this advising speech,
They deigned not e'en to glance at it at all.
And then of all that offered, it seemed best
To join my mother, and of mine own will,
Not against his will, take my side with Zeus,
And by my counsels, mine, the dark deep pit
Of Tartaros the ancient Cronos holds,
Himself and his allies. Thus profiting
By me, the mighty ruler of the Gods
Repays me with these evil penalties:
For somehow this disease in sovereignty
Inheres, of never trusting to one's friends.[2]
And since ye ask me under what pretence
He thus maltreats me, I will show it you:
For soon as He upon his father's throne
Had sat secure, forthwith to different Gods
He diverse gifts distributed, and his realm

[1] The words leave it uncertain whether Themis is identified with Earth, or, as in the *Eumenides*, (v. 2,) distinguished from her. The Titans as a class, then, children of Okeanos and Chthôn, (another name for *Land* or *Earth*,) are the kindred rather than the brothers of Prometheus.

[2] The generalising words here, as in v. 35, appeal to the Athenian hatred of all that was represented by the words *tyrant* and *tyranny*.

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Began to order. But of mortal men
He took no heed, but purposed utterly
To crush their race and plant another new;
And, I excepted, none dared cross his will;
But I did dare, and mortal men I freed
From passing, smitten down, to Hades' depths;
And therefore am I bound beneath these woes,
Dreadful to suffer, pitiable to see:
And I, who in my pity thought of men
More than myself, have not been worthy deemed
To gain like favour, but all ruthlessly
I thus am chained, foul shame this sight to Zeus.

Chor. Iron-hearted must he be and made of rock
Who is not moved, Prometheus, by thy woes:
Fain could I wish I ne'er had seen such things,
And, seeing them, am wounded to the heart.

Prom. Yea, I am piteous for my friends to see.

Chor. Did'st thou not go to farther lengths than this?

Prom. I made men cease from dwelling on their doom.[1]

Chor. What medicine did'st thou find for that disease?

Prom. Blind hopes I gave to live and dwell with them.

[1] The state described is that of men who "through fear of death are all their life-time subject to bondage." That state, the parent of all superstition, fostered the slavish awe in which Zeus delighted. Prometheus, representing the active intellect of man, bestows new powers, new interests, new hopes, which at last divert them from that fear.

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Chor. Great service that thou did'st for mortal men!
Prom. And more than that, I gave them fire, yes, I.
Chor. Do short-lived men the flaming fire possess?
Prom. Yea, and full many an art they'll learn from it.
Chor. And is it then on charges such as these
That Zeus maltreats thee, and no respite gives
Of many woes? And has thy pain no end?
Prom. End there is none, except as pleases Him.
Chor. How shall it please? What hope hast thou? See'st not
That thou hast sinned? And yet to say, "thou hast sinned,"
Gives me no pleasure, and is pain to thee.
Well! let us leave these things, and, if we may,
Seek out some means to 'scape from this thy woe.
Prom. 'Tis a light thing for one who has his foot
Beyond the reach of evil to exhort
And counsel him who suffers. This to me
Was all well known. Yea, willing, willingly
I sinned, nor will deny it. Helping men,
I for myself found trouble: yet I thought not
That I with such dread penalties as these
Should wither here upon these lofty crags,
Lighting on this lone hill and neighbourless.
Wherefore wail not for these my present woes,
But, drawing nigh, my coming fortunes hear,
That ye may learn the whole case thoroughly.
Nay, hearken, hearken; show your sympathy

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With him who suffers now. 'Tis thus that woe,
Wandering, now falls on this one, now on that.
Chor. Not to unwilling hearers hast thou uttered,
Prometheus, thy request,
And now with nimble foot abandoning
My swiftly-rushing car,
And the pure æther, path of birds of heaven,
I will draw near this rough and rocky land,
For much do I desire
To hear the tale, full measure, of thy woes.

Enter OKEANOS, *on a car drawn by a winged gryphon.*

Okean. Lo, I come to thee, Prometheus,
Reaching goal of distant journey,[1]
Guiding this my winged courser
By my will, without a bridle;
And thy sorrows move my pity.
Force, in part, I deem, of kindred
Leads me on, nor know I any,
Whom apart from kin, I honour
Compared with thee, in fuller measure.
This thou shalt know as true and earnest:
Not mine the art of glozing speeches.
Come then, tell me how to help thee:
Ne'er shalt thou say that friend more fond and true
Is found than I, Okeanos to thee.

[1] The home of Okeanos was in the far West, at the boundary of the great stream surrounding the whole world, from which he took his name.

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Prom. Let be. What boots it? Thou then too art come
To gaze upon my sufferings. How did'st dare
Leaving the stream that bears thy name, and caves
Hewn in the living rock, this land to visit,
Mother of iron? What then, art thou come
To gaze upon my fall and offer pity?
Behold this sight: see here the friend of Zeus,
Who helped to seat him in his sovereignty,
With what foul outrage I am crushed by him!

Okean. I see, Prometheus, and I wish to give thee
My best advice, all subtle though thou be.
Know thou thyself,[1] and fit thyself to words
To thee full new. New king the Gods have now;
But if thou utter words thus rough and sharp,
Perchance, though sitting far away on high,
Zeus yet may hear thee, and his present wrath
Seem to thee but as child's play of distress.
Nay, thou poor sufferer, quit the rage thou hast,
And seek a remedy for these thine ills.
A tale thrice-told perchance I seem to speak:
Lo! this, Prometheus, is the punishment
Of thine o'er-lofty speech, nor art thou yet
Humbled, nor yieldest to thy miseries,
And fain would'st add fresh evils unto these.
But thou, if thou wilt take me as thy teacher,

[1] One of the sayings of the Seven Sages, already recognised and quoted as a familiar proverb.

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Wilt not kick out against the pricks; seeing well
A monarch reigns who gives account to none.
And now I go, and will an effort make,
If I, perchance, may free thee from thy woes;
Be still then, hush thy petulance of speech,
Or knowest thou not, o'er-clever as thou art,
That idle tongues must still their forfeit pay?

Prom. I envy thy good luck who 'rt free from blame
Though thou shared'st all, and in my cause wast bold;[1]
Nay, let me be, nor trouble thou thyself;
Thou wilt not, canst not soothe Him; very hard
Is He of soothing. Look to it thyself,
Lest thou some mischief meet with in the way.

Okean. It is thy wont thy neighbours' minds to school
Far better than thine own. From deeds, not words,
I draw my proof. But do not drive me back
When I am hasting on, for lo, I deem,
I deem that Zeus will grant this boon to me,
That I should free thee from these woes of thine.

Prom. I thank thee much, yea, ne'er will cease to thank;
For thou no whit of zeal dost lack; yet take,
I pray, no trouble for me: all in vain
Thy trouble, nothing helping, e'en if thou

[1] In the mythos, Okeanos had given his daughter Hesione in marriage to Prometheus after the theft of fire, and thus had identified himself with his transgression.

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Should'st care to take this trouble. Nay, be still;
Keep out of harm's way: sufferer though I be,
I would not therefore wish to give my woes
A wider range o'er others. No, not so:
For lo! my mind is wearied with the grief
Of that my kinsman Atlas,[1] who doth stand
In the far West, supporting on his shoulders
The pillars of the earth and heaven, a burden
His arms can ill but hold: I pity too
The giant dweller of Kilikian caves,
Dread portent, with his hundred hands, subdued
By force, the mighty Typhon,[2] who arose
'Gainst all the Gods, with sharp and dreadful jaws
Hissing out slaughter, and from out his eyes
There flashed the terrible brightness as of one

[1] In the *Theogony* of Hesiod, (v. 509,) Prometheus and Atlas appear as the sons of two sisters. As other Titans were thought of as buried under volcanoes, so this one was identified with the mountain which had been seen by travellers to Western Africa, or in the seas beyond it, rising like a column to support the vault of heaven. In Herodotos (iv. 174) and all later writers, the name is given to the chain of mountains in Libya, as being the "pillar of the firmament;" but Humboldt and others identify it with the lonely peak of Teneriffe, as seen by Phœnikian or Hellenic voyagers. Teneriffe, too, like most of the other Titan mountains, was at one time volcanic. Homer (*Odyss.* i. 53) represents him as holding the pillars which separate heaven from earth; Hesiod (*Theogon.* v. 517) as himself standing near the Hesperides, (this too points to Teneriffe) sustaining the heavens with his head and shoulders.

[2] The volcanic character of the whole of Asia Minor, and the liability to earthquakes which has marked nearly every period of its history, led men to connect it also with the traditions of the Titans, some accordingly placing it in Phrygia, some near Sardis, some, as here, in Kilikia. Hesiod (*Theogon.* v. 820) describes Typhon as a serpent-monster hissing out fire; Pindar (*Pyth.* i. 30, viii. 21) as lying with his head and breast crushed beneath the weight of Ætna, and his feet extending to Cumæ.

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Who would make havoc of the might of Zeus.
But the unsleeping dart of Zeus came on him,
Down-swooping thunderbolt that breathes out flame,
Which from his lofty boastings startled him,
For he i' the heart was struck, to ashes burnt,
His strength all thunder-shattered ; and he lies
A helpless, powerless carcase, near the strait
Of the great sea, fast pressed beneath the roots
Of ancient Ætna, where on highest peak
Hephæstos sits and smites his iron red-hot,
From whence hereafter streams of fire shall burst,[1]
Devouring with fierce jaws the golden plains
Of fruitful, fair Sikelia. Such the wrath
That Typhon shall belch forth with bursts of storm,
Hot, breathing fire, and unapproachable,
Though burnt and charred by thunderbolts of Zeus.
Not inexperienced art thou, nor dost need
My teaching : save thyself, as thou know'st how ;
And I will drink my fortune to the dregs,
Till from his wrath the mind of Zeus shall rest.[2]

Okean. Know'st thou not this, Prometheus, even this,
Of wrath's disease wise words the healers are ?

Prom. Yea, could one soothe the troubled heart in time,
Nor vex with violence a soul inflamed.

[1] The words point probably to an eruption, then fresh in men's memories, which had happened B.C. 476.

[2] By some editors this speech from "No, not so," to "thou know'st how," is assigned to Okeanos.

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Okean. But in due forethought with bold daring blent,
What mischief see'st thou lurking? Tell me this.

Prom. A needless toil and fond simplicity.

Okean. Let me, I pray, that sickness suffer, since
'Tis best being wise to have not wisdom's show.

Prom. Nay, but this error shall be deemed as mine.

Okean. Thy word then clearly sends me home at once.

Prom. Yea, lest thy pity for me work thee ill.

Okean. What! from that new king on his mighty throne?

Prom. Look to it, lest his heart be vexed with thee.

Okean. Thy fate, Prometheus, teaches me that lesson.

Prom. Away, withdraw! maintain the mind thou hast.

Okean. Thou urgest me already hasting on;
For this my bird four-footed flaps with wings
The clear path of the æther; willingly
Would he bend knee in his own stall at home. [*Exit.*

STROPH. I.

Chor. I grieve, Prometheus, for thy dreary fate,
Shedding from tender eyes
The dew of plenteous tears;
With streams, as when the watery south wind blows,
My cheek is wet;
For lo! these things are all unenviable,
And Zeus, by his own laws his sway maintaining,

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Shows to the elder Gods
A mood of haughtiness.

ANTISTROPH. I.

And all the country echoeth with the moan,
And poureth many a tear
For that high, stately power
Of ancient days that thou of old did'st share
With those of one blood sprung;
And all the mortal men who hold the plain
Of holy Asia as their land of sojourn,
They grieve in sympathy
For thy woes lamentable.

STROPH. II.

And they, the maiden band who find their home
On distant Colchian coasts,
Fearless of fight,[1]
Or Skythian horde in earth's remotest clime,
By far Mæotis lake.[2]

ANTISTROPH. II.

* And warlike glory of Arabia's tribes,[3]
Who nigh to Caucasos

[1] These are, of course, the Amazons, who were believed to have come through Thrakè from the Tauric Chersonesos, and had left traces of their name and habits in the Attic traditions of Theseus.

[2] Beyond the plains of Skythia, and the Lake Mæotis (the sea of Azov) there would be the great river Okeanos, which was believed to flow round the earth.

[3] Sarmatia has been conjectured instead of Arabia. No Greek author sanctions the extension of the latter name to so remote a region as that north of the Caspian.

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In rock-fort dwell,
An army fearful, with sharp-pointed spear
Raging in war's array.

STROPH. III.

One other Titan only have I seen,
One other of the Gods,
Thus bound in woes of adamantine strength—
Atlas, who ever groans
Beneath the burden of a crushing might,
The out-spread vault of heaven.

ANTISTROPH. III.

And lo! the ocean billows murmur loud
In one accord with him;[1]
The sea-depths groan, and Hades' swarthy pit
Re-echoeth the sound,
And fountains of the rivers, flowing clear,
Wail the sad tale of woe.

Prom. Think not it is through pride or stiff self-will
That I am silent. But my heart is worn,
Self-contemplating, as I see myself
Thus outraged. Yet what other hand than mine
Gave these young Gods in fulness all their gifts?
But these I speak not of; for I should tell
To you that know them. But these woes of men,[2]

[1] Th Greek leaves the object of the sympathy undefined, but it seems better to refer it to that which Atlas receives from the waste of waters around, and the dark worlds beyond, than to the pity shown to Prometheus. This had been already dwelt on in line 421.

[2] The passage that follows has for modern palæontologists the interest of coinciding with their views as to the progress of human society, and the

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List ye to these,—how them, before as babes,
I roused to reason, gave them power to think;
And this I say, not finding fault with men,
But showing my good-will in all I gave.
For first, though seeing they did not perceive,
And hearing heard not rightly. But, like forms
Of phantom-dreams, throughout their life's whole length
They muddled all at random; did not know
Houses of brick that catch the sunlight's warmth,
Nor yet the work of carpentry. They dwelt
In hollowed holes like swarms of tiny ants
In sunless depths of caverns; and they had
No certain signs of winter, nor of spring
Flower-laden, nor of summer with her fruits;
But without counsel fared their whole life long,
Until I showed the risings of the stars,
And settings hard to recognise.[1] And I
Found Number for them, chief of all the arts,
* Groupings of letters, Memory's handmaid that
And mother of the Muses.[2] And I first
Bound in the yoke wild steeds, submissive made
Or to the collar or men's limbs, that so
They might in man's place bear his greatest toils;

condition of mankind during what has been called the "Stone" period. Comp. Lucretius, v. 955–984.

1 Comp. Mr Blakesley's note on Herod. ii. 4, as showing that here there was the greater risk of faulty observation.

2 Another reading gives perhaps a better sense—

"Memory, handmaid true
And mother of the Muses."

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And horses trained to love the rein I yoked
To chariots, glory of wealth's pride of state;[1]
Nor was it any one but I that found
Sea-crossing, canvas-wingèd cars of ships:
Such rare designs inventing (wretched me!)
For mortal men, I yet have no resource
By which to free myself from this my woe.[2]

Chor. Foul shame thou sufferest: of thy sense bereaved,
Thou errest greatly; and like leech unskilled
Thou losest heart when smitten with disease,
And know'st not how to find the remedies
Wherewith to heal thine own soul's sicknesses.

Prom. Hearing what yet remains thou 'lt wonder more,
What arts and what resources I devised;
And this the chief: if any one fell ill,
There was no help for him, nor healing food,
Nor unguent, nor yet potion; but for want
Of drugs they wasted, till I showed to them
The blendings of all mild medicaments,[3]

[1] In Greece, as throughout the East, the ox was used for all agricultural labours, the horse by the noble and the rich, either in war chariots, or stately processions, or in chariot races in the great games.

[2] Compare with this the account of the inventions of Palamedes in Sophocles, *Fragm.* 379.

[3] Here we can recognise the knowledge of one who had studied in the schools of Pythagoras, or had at any rate picked up their terminology. A more immediate connexion may perhaps be traced with the influence of Epimenides, who was said to have spent many years in searching out the healing virtues of plants, and to have written books about them.

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Wherewith they ward the attacks of sickness sore.
I gave them many modes of prophecy;[1]
And I first taught them what dreams needs must prove
True visions, and made known the ominous sounds
Full hard to know; and tokens by the way,
And flights of taloned birds I clearly marked,—
Those on the right propitious to mankind,
And those sinister,—and what form of life
They each maintain, and what their enmities
Each with the other, and their loves and friendships;
And of the inward parts the plumpness smooth,
And with what colour they the Gods would please,
And the streaked comeliness of gall and liver,
And burning limbs enwrapt in fat, and chine.
I led the way to art full difficult:
And I gave eyes to omens drawn from fire,
Till then dim-visioned. So far then for this.
And 'neath the earth the hidden boons for men,
Bronze, iron, silver, gold, who else could say
That he, ere I did, found them? None, I know,
Unless he fain would babble in his speech.
In one short word, then, learn the truth condensed,—
All arts of mortals from Prometheus spring.

[1] The lines that follow form almost a manual of the art of divination as then practised. The "ominous sounds" include chance words, strange cries, any unexpected utterance that connected itself with men's fears for the future. The flights of birds were watched by the diviner as he faced the north, and so the region on the right hand was that of the sunrise, light, blessedness. On the left there was darkness and gloom and death.

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Chor. Nay, be not thou to men so over-kind;
While thou thyself art in sore evil case;
For I am sanguine that thou too, released
From bonds, shalt be as strong as Zeus himself.

Prom. It is not thus that Fate's decree is fixed;
But I, long crushed with twice ten thousand woes
And bitter pains, shall then escape my bonds;
Art is far weaker than Necessity.

Chor. Who then directs Necessity's career?

Prom. Fates triple-formed, Erinnyes unforgetting.

Chor. Is Zeus, then, weaker in his might than these?

Prom. Be sure He cannot 'scape his destiny.

Chor. What is Zeus' destiny but still to reign?

Prom. Thou may'st no further learn, ask thou no more.

Chor. 'Tis doubtless some dread secret which thou hidest.

Prom. Of other theme make mention, for the time
Is not yet come to utter this, but still
It must be hidden to the uttermost;
For by thus keeping it it is that I
Escape my bondage foul, and these my pains.

STROPH. I.

Chor. Ah! ne'er may Zeus the Lord,
Whose sovran sway rules all,
His strength in conflict set
Against my feeble will!
Nor may I fail to serve

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The Gods with holy feast
Of whole burnt-offerings,
Where the stream ever flows
That bears my father's name,
The great Okeanos!
Nor may I sin in speech!
May this grace more and more
Sink deep into my soul
And never fade away!

ANTISTROPH. I.

Sweet is it in strong hope
To spend long years of life,
With bright and cheering joy
Our heart's thoughts nourishing.
I shudder, seeing thee
Thus vexed and harassed sore
By twice ten thousand woes;
For thou in pride of heart,
Having no fear of Zeus,
In thine own obstinacy,
Dost show for mortal men,
Affection over-great,
Prometheus, yea, too great.

STROPH. II.

See how that boon, dear friends,
For thee is bootless found.
Say, where is any help?
What aid from mortals comes?

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Did'st thou not see this brief and powerless life,
Fleeting as dreams, with which man's purblind race
Is fast in fetters bound?
Never shall mortal men
With counsel vain transgress
The harmony of Zeus.

ANTISTROPH. II.

This lesson have I learnt
Beholding thy sad fate,
Prometheus! Other strains,
Far other, came to me
When I sang wedding hymns amid thy halls,
And round thy bridal bed, when thou did'st take
In wedlock's holy bands
The sister whom we love,
Our own Hesione,
Persuading her with gifts
As wife to share thy couch.

Enter Io *in form like a fair heifer, with a woman's face,*[1] *followed by the Spectre of* ARGOS.

Io. What land is this? What people? Whom shall I
Say that I see thus vexed

[1] The points of contact between the myth of Io and that of Prometheus, as adopted, or perhaps developed, by Æschylos, are—(1.) that from her the destined deliverer of the chained Titan is to come; (2.) that both were suffering from the cruelty of Zeus; (3.) that the wanderings of Io gave scope for the wild tales of far countries on which the imagination of the Athenians fed greedily. But, as the *Suppliants* may serve to show, the story itself

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With bit and curb of rock?
For what offence dost thou
Bear fatal punishment?
Tell me to what far land
I've wandered here in woe.
Ah me! ah me!
Again the gadfly stings me miserable.
Spectre of Argos, thou the earth-born one—
Ah, keep him off, O Earth!
I fear to look upon that herdsman dread,
Him with ten thousand eyes:
Ah lo! he cometh with his crafty look,
Whom Earth refuses even dead to hold;
But coming from beneath
He hunts me miserable,
And drives me famished o'er the sea-beach sand.

STROPH.

And still his waxened reed-pipe soundeth clear
A soft and slumberous strain:
O heavens! oh, ye Gods!
Whither do these long wanderings lead me on?
For what offence, O son of Cronos, what,
Hast thou thus bound me fast
In these great miseries?
Ah me! ah me!

had a strange fascination for him. In the birth of Epaphos, and Io's release from her frenzy, he saw, it may be, a reconciliation of what had seemed hard to reconcile, a solution of the problems of the world, like in kind to that which was shadowed forth in the lost *Prometheus Unbound*.

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And why with terror of the gadfly's sting
Dost thou thus vex me frenzied in my soul?
Burn me with fire, or bury me in earth,
To wild sea-monsters give me as a prey:
Nay, grudge me not, O King,
An answer to my prayers:.
Enough my many-wandered wanderings
Have exercised my soul,
Nor have I power to learn
How to avert the woe.
Hear'st thou the voice of maiden crowned with horns?
Prom. Surely I hear the maid by gadfly driven,
Daughter of Inachos, who warmed the heart
Of Zeus with love, and now through Hera's hate
Is tried, perforce, with wanderings over-long?

ANTISTROPH.

Io. How is it that thou speak'st my father's name?
Tell me, the suffering one,
Who art thou, who, poor wretch,
Who thus so truly nam'st me miserable,
Namest the plague from Heaven,
Which with its wandering stings
Wears me to death? Ah woe!
And I with famished and unseemly bounds
Rushed madly here, subdued by jealous craft.
Ah, who of all that suffer, born to woe,
Have trouble like the pain that I endure?
But thou, make clear to me

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What yet for me remains,
What remedy, what healing for my pangs.
Show me, if thou dost know:
Speak out and tell to me,
The maid by wanderings vexed.

Prom. I will say plainly all thou seek'st to know;
Nor in dark tangled riddles, but plain speech,
As it is meet that friends to friends should speak;
Thou see'st Prometheus who gave fire to men.

Io. O thou to men as benefactor known,
Why, poor Prometheus, sufferest thou this pain?

Prom. It is but now I ceased to wail my woes.

Io. Wilt thou not then bestow this boon on me?

Prom. Say what thou seek'st, for I will tell thee all.

Io. Tell me, who fettered thee in this ravine?

Prom. The will was that of Zeus, the hand Hephæstos'.

Io. Of what offence dost thou the forfeit pay?

Prom. This much and this much only may I speak.

Io. Tell me, I pray, at least, what end shall come
To my drear wanderings; when the time shall be.

Prom. Not to know this is better than to know.

Io. Nay, hide not from me what I have to bear.

Prom. It is not that I grudge the boon to thee.

Io. Why then delayest thou to tell the whole?

Prom. Not from ill will, but loth to vex thy soul.

Io. Let not thy care for me exceed my wish.

Prom. If thou desire it I must speak. Hear then.

Chor. Not yet though; grant me share of pleasure too,

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Let us first ask the tale of her great woe,
While she unfolds her life's consuming chances;
Her future struggles let her learn from thee.

Prom. 'Tis thy work, Io, to grant these their wish,
On other grounds and as thy father's kin:[1]
For to bewail and moan one's evil chance,
Here where one trusts to gain a pitying tear
From those who hear,—this is not labour lost.

Io. I know not how to disobey your wish;
So ye shall learn the whole that ye desire
In speech full clear. And yet I blush to tell
The storm that came from God, and brought the loss
Of maiden form, what way it seized on me.
For nightly visions coming evermore
Into my virgin bower, sought to woo me
With glozing words. "O virgin greatly blest,
Why art thou still a virgin when thou might'st
Attain to highest wedlock? For with dart
Of passion for thee Zeus doth glow, and fain
Would make thee his. And thou, O child, spurn not
The bed of Zeus, but go to Lerna's field,
The rich deep mead where feed thy father's kine,
That so the eye of Zeus may find repose
From this his craving." With such visions I
Was haunted every evening, till I dared
To tell my father all these dreams of night,

[1] Inachos the father of Io (identified with the Argive river of the same name) was, like all rivers, a son of Okeanos and therefore brother to the nymphs who had come to see Prometheus.

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And he to Pytho and Dodona sent
Full many to consult the Gods, that he
Might learn what deeds and words would please Heaven's lords.
And they came bringing speech of oracles
Shot with dark sayings, dim and hard to know.
At last a clear word came to Inachos
Charging him plainly, and commanding him
To thrust me from my country and my home,
To stray at large[1] to utmost bounds of earth;
And, should he gainsay, that the fiery bolt
Of Zeus should come and sweep away his race.
And he, by Loxias' oracles induced,
Thrust me, against his will, against mine too,
And drove me from my home; but spite of all,
The curb of Zeus constrained him this to do.
And then forthwith my form and mind were changed;
And horned, as ye see me, stung to the quick
By biting gadfly, I with maddened leap
Rushed to Kerchneia's fair and limpid stream,
And fount of Lerna.[2] And a giant herdsman,
Argos, full rough of temper, followed me,
With many an eye beholding, on my track:

[1] The words used have an almost technical meaning as applied to animals that were consecrated to the service of a God, and set free to wander where they liked. The fate of Io, as at once devoted to Zeus and animalised in form, was thus shadowed forth in the very language of the Oracle.

[2] Lerna was a lake near the mouth of the Inachos, close to the sea. Kerchneia may perhaps be identified with the Kenchreæ, the haven of Korinth in later geographies.

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And him a sudden and unlooked-for doom
Deprived of life. And I, by gadfly stung,
By scourge from Heaven am driven from land to land.
What has been done thou hearest. And if thou
Can'st tell what yet remains of woe, declare it;
Nor in thy pity soothe me with fair words;
For hollow words, I deem, are worst of ills.

Chor. Away, away, let be:
Ne'er thought I that such tales
Would ever, ever come unto mine ears;
Nor that such terrors, woes, and outrages,
Hard to look on, hard to bear,
Would chill my soul with sharp goad, double-edged.
Ah fate! Ah fate!
I shudder, seeing Io's fortune strange.

Prom. Thou art too quick in groaning, full of fear:
Wait thou a while until thou hear the rest.

Chor. Speak thou and tell. Unto the sick 'tis sweet
Clearly to know what yet remains of pain.

Prom. Your former wish ye gained full easily.
Your first desire was to learn of her
The tale she tells of her own sufferings;
Now therefore hear the woes that yet remain
For this poor maid to bear at Hera's hands.
And thou, O child of Inachos! take heed
To these my words, that thou may'st hear the goal
Of all thy wanderings. First then, turning hence
Towards the sunrise, tread the untilled plains,

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And thou shalt reach the Skythian nomads, those[1]
Who on smooth-rolling waggons dwell aloft
In wicker houses, with far-darting bows
Duly equipped. Approach thou not to these,
But trending round the coasts on which the surf
Beats with loud murmurs,[2] traverse thou that clime.
On the left hand there dwell the Chalybes,[3]
Who work in iron. Of these do thou beware,
For fierce are they and most inhospitable;
And thou wilt reach the river fierce and strong,
True to its name.[4] This seek not thou to ford,
For it is hard to cross, until thou come
To Caucasos itself, of all high hills
The highest, where a river pours its strength
From the high peaks themselves. And thou must cross
Those summits near the stars, must onward go
Towards the south, where thou shalt find the host
Of the Amazons, hating men, whose home
Shall one day be around Thermôdon's bank,

[1] The wicker huts used by Skythian or Thrakian nomads (the Calmucks of modern geographers) are described by Herodotos (iv. 46) and are still in use.

[2] *Sc.*, the N.E. boundary of the Euxine, where spurs of the Caucasos ridge approach the sea.

[3] The Chalybes are placed by geographers to the south of Colchis. The description of the text indicates a locality farther to the north.

[4] Probably the Araxes, which the Greeks would connect with a word conveying the idea of a torrent dashing on the rocks. The description seems to imply a river flowing into the Euxine from the Caucasos, and the condition is fulfilled by the Hypanis or *Kouban*.

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By Themiskyra,[1] where the ravenous jaws
Of Salmydessos ope upon the sea,
Treacherous to sailors, stepdame stern to ships,[2]
And they with right good will shall be thy guides;
And thou, hard by a broad pool's narrow gates,
Wilt pass to the Kimmerian isthmus. Leaving
This boldly, thou must cross Mæotic channel;[3]
And there shall be great fame 'mong mortal men
Of this thy journey, and the Bosporos[4]
Shall take its name from thee. And Europe's plain
Then quitting, thou shalt gain the Asian coast.
Doth not the all-ruling monarch of the Gods
Seem all ways cruel? For, although a God,
He, seeking to embrace this mortal maid,
Imposed these wanderings on her. Thou hast found,
O maiden! bitter suitor for thy hand;
For great as are the ills thou now hast heard,
Know that as yet not e'en the prelude 's known.

Io. Ah woe! woe! woe!

[1] When the Amazons appear in contact with Greek history, they are found in Thrace. But they had come from the coast of Pontos, and near the mouth of the Thermôdon, (*Thermeh.*) The words of Prometheus point to yet earlier migrations from the East.

[2] Here, as in Soph. *Antig.* (970) the name Salmydessos represents the rockbound, havenless coast from the promontory of Thynia to the entrance of the Bosporos, which had given to the Black Sea its earlier name of Axenos, the "inhospitable."

[3] The track here is in some confusion. From the south coast of the Black Sea, Io is to find her way to the Tauric Chersonese (the Crimea) and the Kimmerian Bosporos, which flows into the Sea of Azov.

[4] Here, as in a hundred other instances, a false etymology has become the parent of a myth. The name Bosporos is probably Asiatic not Greek, and has an entirely different signification.

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Prom. Again thou groan'st and criest. What wilt do
When thou shalt learn the evils yet to come?

Chor. What! are there troubles still to come for her?

Prom. Yea, stormy sea of lamentable woe.

Io. What gain is it to live? Why cast I not
Myself at once from this high precipice,
And, dashed to earth, be free from all my woes?
Far better were it once for all to die
Than one's whole life to suffer pain and grief.

Prom. My struggles then full hardly thou would'st bear,
For whom there is no destiny of death;
For that might bring a respite from my woes:
But now there is no limit to my pangs
Till Zeus be hurled out from his sovereignty.

Io. What! shall Zeus e'er be hurled from his estate?

Prom. 'Twould give thee joy, I trow, to see that fall.

Io. How should it not, when Zeus so foully wrongs me?

Prom. That this is so thou now may'st hear from me.

Io. Who then shall strip him of his sovereign power?

Prom. Himself shall do it by his own rash plans.

Io. But how? Tell this, unless it bringeth harm.

Prom. He shall wed one for whom one day he 'll grieve.

Io. Heaven-born or mortal? Tell, if tell thou may'st.

Prom. Why ask'st thou who? I may not tell thee that.

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Io. Shall his bride hurl him from his throne of might?

Prom. Yea; she shall bear child mightier than his sire.

Io. Has he no way to turn aside that doom?

Prom. No, none; unless I from my bonds be loosed.[1]

Io. Who then shall loose thee 'gainst the will of Zeus?

Prom. It must be one of thy posterity.

Io. What, shall a child of mine free thee from ills?

Prom. Yea, the third generation after ten.[2]

Io. No more these oracles are clear to me.

* *Prom.* Nay, seek not thou thine own drear fate to know.

Io. Do not, a boon presenting, then withdraw it.

Prom. Of two alternatives I'll give thee choice.

Io. Tell me of what, then give me leave to choose.

Prom. I give it then. Choose or to know the fate
That waits on thee, or who shall set me free.

Chor. Of these be willing one request to grant
To her, and one to me; nor scorn my words:
Tell her what yet of wanderings she must bear,
And me who shall release thee. This I crave.

[1] The lines refer to the story that Zeus loved Thetis the daughter of Nereus, and followed her to Caucasos, but abstained from marriage with her because Prometheus warned him that the child born of that union should overthrow his father. Here the future is used of what was still contingent only. In the lost play of the Trilogy the myth was possibly brought to its conclusion and connected with the release of Prometheus.

[2] Heracles, whose genealogy was traced through Alcmena, Perseus, Danaë, Danaos, and seven other names, to Epaphos and Io.

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Prom. Since ye are eager, I will not refuse
To utter fully all that ye desire.
Thee, Io, first I 'll tell thy wanderings,
And write it in the tablets of thy mind.
When thou shalt cross the straits, of continents
The boundary,[1] take thou the onward path
On to the fiery-hued and sun-tracked East.
[And first of all, to frozen Northern blasts
Thou 'lt come, and there beware the rushing whirl,
Lest it should come upon thee suddenly,
And sweep thee onward with the cloud-rack wild;]
Crossing the sea-surf till thou come at last
Unto Kisthene's Gorgoneian plains,
Where dwell the grey-haired virgin Phorkides,[2]
Three, swan-shaped, with one eye between them all
And but one tooth; whom nor the sun beholds
With radiant beams, nor yet the moon by night:
And near them are their winged sisters three,
The Gorgons, serpent-tressed, and hating men,
Whom mortal wight may not behold and live.
* Such is one ill I bid thee guard against;
Now hear another monstrous sight: Beware

[1] Probably the Kimmerian Bosporos. The Tanais or Phasis has, however, been conjectured.

[2] Kisthene belongs to the geography of legend, lying somewhere on the shore of the great ocean-river in Libya or Ethiopia, at the end of the world, a great mountain in the far West, beyond the Hesperides, the dwelling place, as here, of the Gorgons the daughters of Phorkys. Those first named are the Graiæ.

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The sharp-beaked hounds of Zeus that never bark,[1]
The Gryphons, and the one-eyed mounted host
Of Arimaspians, who around the stream
That flows o'er gold, the ford of Pluto, dwell:[2]
Draw not thou nigh to them. But distant land
Thou shalt approach, the swarthy tribes who dwell
By the sun's fountains,[3] Æthiopia's stream:
By its banks wend thy way until thou come
To that great fall where from the Bybline hills
The holy Neilos pours delicious flood;
And it shall guide thee to Neilotic land,
Three-angled, where, O Io, 'tis decreed
For thee and for thy progeny to found
A far-off colony. And if of this
Aught seem to thee as stammering speech obscure,
Ask yet again and learn it thoroughly:
Far more of leisure have I than I like.

[1] Here, like the "wingèd hound" of v. 1043, for the eagles that are the messengers of Zeus.

[2] We are carried back again from the fabled West to the fabled East. The Arimaspians, with one eye, and the Grypes or Gryphons (the griffins of mediæval heraldry) quadrupeds with the wings and beaks of eagles, were placed by most writers (Herod. iv. 13, 27) in the north of Europe, in or beyond the *terra incognita* of Skythia. The mention of the "ford of Pluto" and Æthiopia, however, may possibly imply (if we identify it, as Mr Paley does, with the Tartessos of Spain, or Bœtis (*Guadalquivir*) that Æschylos followed another legend which placed them in the West.

[3] The name was applied by later writers (Quintus Curtius, iv. 7, 22; Lucretius, vi. 848) to the fountain in the temple of Jupiter Ammon in the great Oasis. The "river Æthiops" may be purely imaginary, but it may also suggest the possibility of some vague knowledge of the Niger, or more probably of the Nile itself in the upper regions of its course. The "Bybline hills" carry the name Byblos, which we only read of as belonging to a town in the Delta, to the Second Cataract.

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Chor. If thou hast aught to add, aught left untold
Of her sore-wasting wanderings, speak it out;
But if thou hast said all, then grant to us
The boon we asked. Thou dost not, sure, forget it.

Prom. The whole course of her journeying she hath heard,
And that she know she hath not heard in vain
I will tell out what troubles she hath borne
Before she came here, giving her sure proof
Of these my words. The greater bulk of things
I will pass o'er, and to the very goal
Of all thy wanderings go. For when thou cam'st
To the Molossian plains, and by the grove[1]
Of lofty-ridged Dodona, and the shrine
Oracular of Zeus Thesprotian,
And the strange portent of the talking oaks,
By which full clearly, not in riddle dark,
Thou wast addressed as noble spouse of Zeus,—
If aught of pleasure such things give to thee.
Thence strung to frenzy, thou did'st rush along
The sea-coast's path to Rhea's mighty gulf,[2]
Whence thou wert vexèd in thy backward way:
And for all time to come that reach of sea,
Know well, from thee Ionian shall be called,
To all men record of thy journeyings.

1 Comp. Sophocles, *Trachin*, v. 1168.
2 The Adriatic or Ionian Gulf.

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These then are tokens to thee that my mind
Sees somewhat more than that is manifest.
What follows [*to the Chorus*] I will speak to you and her
In common, on the track of former words
Returning once again. A city stands,
Canôbos, at its country's furthest bound,
Hard by the mouth and silt-bank of the Nile;
There Zeus shall give thee back thy mind again,[1]
With hand that works no terror touching thee,
Touch only—and thou then shalt bear a child
Of Zeus begotten, Epaphos, "Touch-born," 870
Swarthy of hue, whose lot shall be to reap
The whole plain watered by the broad-streamed Neilos:
And in the generation fifth from him
A household numbering fifty shall return
Against their will to Argos, in their flight
From wedlock with their cousins.[2] And they too,
(Kites but a little space behind the doves)
With eager hopes of marriage rites that lie
Beyond pursuit shall come; and God shall grudge
To give up their sweet bodies. And the land

[1] In the *Suppliants*, Zeus is said to have soothed her, and restored her to her human consciousness by his "divine breathings." The thought underlying the legend may be taken either as a distortion of some primitive tradition, or as one of the "unconscious prophecies" of heathenism. The deliverer is not to be born after the common manner of men, and is to have a divine as well as a human parentage.

[2] See the argument of the *Suppliants*, who, as the daughters of Danaos, descended from Epaphos, are here referred to.

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Pelasgian[1] shall receive them, when by stroke
Of woman's murderous hand these men shall lie
Smitten to death by daring deed of night :
For every bride shall take her husband's life,
And dip in blood the sharp two-edged sword
(May Kypris such as this befall my foes !)
Yet one of that fair band shall love persuade
Her husband not to slaughter, and her will
Shall lose its edge ; and she shall make her choice
Rather as weak than murderous to be known.
And she at Argos shall a royal seed
Bring forth (long speech 'twould take to tell this clear)
Famed for his arrows, who shall set me free[2]
From these my woes. Such was the oracle
Mine ancient mother Themis, Titan-born,
Gave to me ; but the manner and the means,—
That needs a lengthy tale to tell the whole,
And thou can'st nothing gain by learning it.

Io. Eleleu ! Oh, Eleleu ![3]

The throbbing pain inflames me, and the mood
Of frenzy-smitten rage ;
The gadfly's pointed sting,
Not forged with fire, attacks,

[1] Argos. So in the *Suppliants*, Pelasgos is the mythical king of the Apian land who receives them.

[2] Heracles, who came to Caucasos, and with his arrows slew the eagle that devoured Prometheus.

[3] The word is simply an interjection of pain, but one so characteristic that I have thought it better to reproduce it than to give any English equivalent.

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And my heart beats against my breast with fear.
Mine eyes whirl round and round:
Out of my course I'm borne
By the wild spirit of fierce agony,
And cannot curb my lips,
And turbid speech at random rushes on
Upon the waves of dread calamity.

STROPH. I.

Chor. Wise, very, wise was he
Who first in thought conceived this maxim sage,
And spread it with his speech,[1]—
That the best wedlock is with equals found,
And that a craftsman, born to work with hands,
Should not desire to wed
Or with the soft luxurious heir of wealth,
Or with the race that boast their lineage high.

ANTISTROPH. I.

Oh ne'er, oh ne'er, dread Fates,
May ye behold me as the bride of Zeus,
The partner of his couch,
Nor may I wed with any heaven-born spouse!
For I shrink back, beholding Io's lot
Of loveless maidenhood,
Consumed and smitten low exceedingly
By the wild wanderings from great Hera sent!

[1] The maxim, "Marry with a woman thine equal," was ascribed to Pittacos.

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STROPH. II.

To me, when marriage lot is on equal terms,
It gives no cause for fear:
Ne'er may the love of any of the Gods,
The strong Gods, look on me
With glance I cannot 'scape!

ANTISTROPH. II.

That fate is war that none can war against,
Source of resourceless ill;
Nor know I what might then become of me:
I see not how to 'scape
The counsel deep of Zeus.

Prom. Yea, of a truth shall Zeus, though stiff of will,
Be brought full low. Such bed of wedlock now
Is he preparing, one to cast him forth
In darkness from his sovereignty and throne.
And then the curse his father Cronos spake
Shall have its dread completion, even that
He uttered when he left his ancient throne;
And from these troubles no one of the Gods
But me can clearly show the way to 'scape.
I know the time and manner: therefore now
Let him sit fearless, in his peals on high
Putting his trust, and shaking in his hands
His darts fire-breathing. Nought shall they avail
To hinder him from falling shamefully
A fall intolerable. Such a combatant
He arms against himself, a marvel dread.

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Who shall a fire discover mightier far
Than the red levin, and a sound more dread
Than roaring of the thunder, and shall shiver
That plague sea-born that causeth earth to quake,
The trident, weapon of Poseidon's strength:
And stumbling on this evil, he shall learn
How different ruling is from servitude.

Chor. What thou dost wish thou mutterest against Zeus.

Prom. Things that shall be, and things I wish, I speak.

Chor. And must we think that Zeus shall serve another?

Prom. Yea, troubles harder far than these are his.

Chor. Art not afraid to vent such words as these?

Prom. What can I fear whose fate is not to die?

Chor. But He may send on thee worse pain than this.

Prom. Let Him then do it: nought finds me unprepared.

Chor. Wisdom is theirs who Adrasteia worship.[1]

Prom. Worship then, praise and flatter him that rules;
My care for Zeus is nought, and less than nought:
Let Him act, let Him rule this little while,
E'en as He will; for long He shall not rule

[1] The Euhemerism of later scholiasts derived the name from a king Adrastos, who was said to have been the first to build a temple to Nemesis, and so the power thus worshipped was called after his name. A better etymology leads us to see in it the idea of the "inevitable" law of retribution working unseen by men, and independently even of the arbitrary will of the Gods, and bringing destruction upon the proud and haughty.

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Over the Gods. But lo! I see at hand
The courier of the Gods, the minister
Of our new sovereign. Doubtless he has come
To bring me tidings of some new device.

Enter HERMES.

Herm. Thee do I speak to,—thee, the teacher wise,
The bitterly o'er-bitter, who 'gainst Gods
Hast sinned in giving gifts to short-lived men—
I speak to thee, the filcher of bright fire.
The Father bids thee say what marriage thou
Dost vaunt, and who shall hurl Him from his might;
And this too not in dark mysterious speech,
But tell each point out clearly. Give me not,
Prometheus, task of double journey. Zeus
Thou seest is not with such words appeased.

Prom. Stately of utterance, full of haughtiness
Thy speech, as fits a messenger of Gods.
Ye yet are young in your new rule, and think
To dwell in painless towers. Have I not
Seen those two rulers driven forth from thence?
And now the third, who reigneth, I shall see
In basest, quickest fall. Seem I to thee
To shrink and quail before these new-made Gods?
Far, very far from that am I. But thou,
Track once again the path by which thou camest;
Thou shalt learn nought of what thou askest me.

Herm. It was by such self-will as this before
That thou did'st bring these sufferings on thyself.

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Prom. I for my part, be sure, would never change
My evil state for that thy bondslave's lot.
Herm. To be the bondslave of this rock, I trow,
Is better than to be Zeus' trusty herald!
Prom. So it is meet the insulter to insult.
Herm. Thou waxest proud, 'twould seem, of this thy doom.
Prom. Wax proud! God grant that I may see my foes
Thus waxing proud, and thee among the rest!
Herm. Dost blame me then for thy calamities?
Prom. In one short sentence—all the Gods I hate,
Who my good turns with evil turns repay.
Herm. Thy words prove thee with no slight madness plagued.
Prom. If to hate foes be madness, mad I am.
Herm. Not one could bear thee, wert thou prosperous.
Prom. Ah me!
Herm. That word is all unknown to Zeus.
Prom. Time waxing old can many a lesson teach.
Herm. Yet thou at least hast not true wisdom learnt.
Prom. I had not else addressed a slave like thee.
Herm. Thou wilt say nought the Father asks, 'twould seem.
Prom. Fine debt I owe him, favour to repay.
Herm. Me as a boy thou scornest then, forsooth.

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Prom. And art thou not a boy, and sillier far,
If that thou thinkest to learn aught from me?
There is no torture nor device by which
Zeus can impel me to disclose these things
Before these bonds that outrage me be loosed.
Let then the blazing levin-flash be hurled;
With white-winged snow-storm and with earth-born thunders
Let Him disturb and trouble all that is;
Nought of these things shall force me to declare
Whose hand shall drive him from His sovereignty.

Herm. See if thou findest any help in this.

Prom. Nay, long ago I've seen, and formed my plans.

Herm. O fool, take heart, take heart at last in time,
To form right thoughts for these thy present woes.

Prom. Like one who soothes a wave, thy speech in vain
Vexes my soul. But deem not thou that I,
Fearing the will of Zeus, shall e'er become
As womanised in mind, or shall entreat
Him whom I greatly loathe, with upturned hand,
In woman's fashion, from these bonds of mine
To set me free. Far, far am I from that.

Herm. It seems that I, saying much, shall speak in vain;
For thou in nought by prayers art pacified,
Or softened in thy heart, but like a colt

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Fresh harnessed, thou dost champ thy bit, and strive,
And fight against the reins. Yet thou art stiff
In weak device; for self-will, by itself,
In one who is not wise, is less than nought.
Look to it, if thou disobey my words,
How great a storm and triple wave of ills [1]
Not to be 'scaped shall come on thee; for first,
With thunder and the levin's blazing flash
The Father this ravine of rock shall crush,
And hide thy carcase, and its rocky arms
Shall grasp thee tight and keep thee in thy place.
And having traversed space of time full long,
Thou shalt come back to light, and then his hound,
The winged hound of Zeus, the ravening eagle,
Shall greedily make banquet of thy flesh,
Coming all day an uninvited guest,
And glut himself upon thy liver dark.
And of that anguish look not for the end,
Before some God shall come to bear thy woes,
And will to pass to Hades' sunless realm,
And the dark cloudy depths of Tartaros.[2]

[1] Either a mere epithet of intensity, as in our "thrice blest," or rising from the supposed fact that every third wave was larger and more impetuous than the others, like the *fluctus decumanus* of the Latins, or from the sequence of three great waves which some have noted as a common phenomenon in storms.

[2] Here again we have a strange shadowing-forth of the mystery of Atonement, and what we have learnt to call "vicarious" satisfaction. In the later legend, Cheiron, suffering from the agony of his wounds, resigns his immortality, and submits to die in place of the ever-living death to which Prometheus was doomed.

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Wherefore take heed. No feigned boast is this,
But spoken all too truly; for the lips
Of Zeus know not to speak a lying speech,
But will perform each single word. And thou,
Search well, be wise, nor think that self-willed pride
Shall ever better prove than counsel good.

Chor. To us doth Hermes seem to utter words
Not out of season; for he bids thee quit
Thy self-willed pride and seek for counsel good.
Hearken thou to him. To the wise of soul
It is foul shame to sin persistently.

Prom. To me who knew it all
He hath this message borne;
And that a foe from foes
Should suffer is not strange.
Therefore on me be hurled
The sharp-edged wreath of fire;
And let heaven's vault be stirred
With thunder and the blasts
Of fiercest winds; and Earth
From its foundations strong,
E'en to its deepest roots,
Let storm-winds make to rock;
And let them heap the waves
Of Ocean's roughened surge
Up to the regions high,
Where move the stars of Heaven;
And to dark Tartaros

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Let Him my carcase hurl,
With mighty blasts of force;
Yet me He shall not slay.
Herm. Such words and thoughts from one
Brainstricken one may hear.
What space divides his state
From frenzy? What repose
Hath he from maddened rage?
But ye who pitying stand
And share his bitter griefs,
Quickly from hence depart,
Lest the relentless roar
Of thunder stun your soul.
Chor. With other words attempt
To counsel and persuade,
And I will hear: for now
Thou hast this word thrust in
That we may never bear.
How dost thou bid me train
My soul to baseness vile?
With him I will endure
Whatever is decreed.
Traitors I 've learnt to hate,
Nor is there any plague
That more than this I loathe.
Herm. Nay then, remember ye
What now I say, nor blame
Your fortune: never say

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That Zeus has cast you down
To evil not foreseen.
Not so; ye cast yourselves:
For now with open eyes,
Not taken unawares,
In Ate's endless net
Ye shall entangled be
By folly of your own.

[*A pause, and then flashes of lightning and peals of thunder.*[1]

Prom. Yea, now in very deed,
No more in word alone,
The earth shakes to and fro,
And the loud thunder's voice
Bellows hard by, and blaze
The flashing levin-fires;
And tempests whirl the dust,
And gusts of all wild winds
On one another leap,
In wild conflicting blasts,
And sky with sea is blent:
Such is the storm from Zeus
That comes as working fear,

[1] It is noticeable that both Æschylos and Sophocles have left us tragedies which end in a thunderstorm as an element of effect. But the contrast between the *Prometheus* and the *Œdipus at Colonos* as to the impression left in the one case of serene reconciliation, and in the other of violent antagonism, is hardly less striking than the resemblance in the outward phenomena, which are common to the two.

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In utter chaos whirled
In terrors manifest.
O Mother venerable!
O Æther! rolling round
The common light of all,
See ye what wrongs I bear?

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THE SUPPLIANTS.

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ARGUMENT.

When Io, after many wanderings, had found refuge in Egypt, and having been touched by Zeus, had given birth to Epaphos, it came to pass that he and his descendants ruled over the region of Canôpos, near one of the seven mouths of Neilos. And in the fifth generation there were two brothers, Danaos and Ægyptos, the sons of Belos, and the former had fifty daughters and the latter fifty sons, and Ægyptos sought the daughters of Danaos in marriage for his sons. And they, looking on the marriage as unholy, and hating those who wooed them, took flight and came to Argos, where Pelasgos then ruled as king, as to the land whence Io, from whom they sprang, had come. And thither the sons of Ægyptos followed them in hot pursuit.

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Dramatis Personæ.

DANAOS.

PELASGOS, *king of* Argos.

Herald.

Chorus of the daughters of DANAOS.

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THE SUPPLIANTS.

SCENE.—Argos, *the entrance of the gates. Statues of* ZEUS, ARTEMIS, *and other Gods, placed against the walls.*

[*Enter Chorus of the* Daughters *of* DANAOS,[1] *in the dress of Egyptian women, with the boughs of Suppliants in their hands, and fillets of white wool twisted round them, chanting as they move in procession to take up their position round the thymele.*

May Zeus, the God of Suppliants, kindly
Look on this our band of wanderers,
That from banks at mouths of Neilos,
Banks of finest sand, departed:[2]
Yea, we left the region sacred,
Grassy plain on Syria's borders,[3]

[1] The daughters of Danaos are always represented as fifty in number. It seems probable, however, that the vocal chorus was limited to twelve, the others appearing as mutes.

[2] The alluvial deposit of the Delta.

[3] Syria is used obviously with a certain geographical vagueness, as including all that we know as Palestine, and the wilderness to the south of it, and so as conterminous with Egypt.

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Not for guilt of blood to exile
By our country's edict sentenced,
But with free choice, loathing wedlock,
Fleeing marriage-rites unholy
With the children of Ægyptos.
And our father Danaos, ruler,
Chief of council, chief of squadrons,
Playing moves on fortune's draught-board,[1]
Chose what seemed the best of evils,
Through the salt sea-waves to hasten,
Steering to the land of Argos,
Whence our race has risen to greatness,
Sprung, so boasts it, from the heifer
Whom the stinging gadfly harassed,
By the touch of Zeus love-breathing:[2]
And to what land more propitious
Could we come than this, before us,
Holding in our hand the branches
Suppliant, wreathed with white wool fillets?
O State! O land! O water gleaming!
Ye the high Gods, ye the awful,
In the dark the graves still guarding;
Thou too with them, Zeus Preserver,[3]

[1] Elsewhere in Æschylos (*Agam.* 33, *Fr.* 132) we trace allusion to games played with dice. Here we have a reference to one the details of which are not accurately known to us, but which seems to have been analogous to draughts or chess.

[2] See the whole story, given as in prophecy in the *Prometheus*, v. 865–880.

[3] The invocation is addressed,—(1.) to the Olympian Gods in the brightness of heaven; (2.) to the Chthonian deities in the darkness below the earth; (3.) to Zeus the Preserver, as the supreme Lord of both.

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Guardian of the just man's dwelling,
Welcome with the breath of pity
Us poor women who are suppliants
For a refuge in your country.
And that swarm of men that follow,
Haughty offspring of Ægyptos,
Ere they set their foot among you
On this silt-strown shore,[1]—oh, send them
Seaward in their ship swift-rowing;
There, with whirlwind tempest-driven,
There, with lightning and with thunder,
There, with blasts that bring the storm-rain,
May they in the fierce sea perish,
Ere they, cousin-brides possessing,
Rest on marriage-beds reluctant,
Which the voice of Right denied them!

STROPH. I.

And now I call on him, the Zeus-sprung calf,[2]
Our true protector, far beyond the sea,
Child of the heifer foundress of our line,
Who crossed the flowery mead,
Born of the breath, and named from touch of Zeus.
*And lo! the destined time

[1] An Athenian audience would probably recognise in this a description of the swampy meadows near the coast at Lerna. The descendants of Io had come to the very spot where the tragic history of their ancestors had had its origin.

[2] The invocation passes on to Epaphos, as a guardian deity, able and willing to succour his afflicted children.

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*Wrought fully with the name,
And she brought forth the "Touch-born," Epaphos.

ANTISTROPH. I.

And now invoking him in grassy fields,
Where erst his mother strayed, to dwellers here
Telling the tale of all her woes of old,
I surest pledge shall give;
And others, strange beyond all fancy's dream,
Shall yet perchance be found;
And in due course of time
Shall men know clearly all our history.

STROPH. II.

And if some augur of the land be near,
Hearing our piteous cry,
Sure he will deem he hears
The voice of Tereus' bride [1]
Piteous and sad of soul,
The nightingale sore-harassed by the kite.

ANTISTROPH. II.

*As she, driven back from wonted haunts and streams,[2]
Mourns with a strange new plaint,
And takes her son's death as the theme of song,
How he at her hand died,
Meeting with evil wrath unmotherly;

STROPH. III.

E'en so do I, to wailing all o'er-given,

[1] Philomela. See the tale as given in the notes to *Agam.* 1113.

[2] "Streams," as flowing through the shady solitude of the groves which the nightingale frequented.

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In plaintive music of Ionian mood,[1]
* Vex the soft cheek on Neilos' banks that bloomed,
And heart that bursts in tears,
And pluck the flowers of lamentations loud,
Not without fear of friends,
*Lest none should help my flight
From that mist-shrouded shore.

ANTISTROPH. III.

But, O ye Gods ancestral! hear my prayer,
Look well upon the justice of our cause,
Nor grant to youth to gain its full desire
Against the laws of right,
But with prompt hate of lust, our marriage bless.
*Of those o'ercome in war
The altar shields the flight,
The majesty of Gods.

STROPH. IV.

May God good issue give![2]
And yet the will of Zeus is hard to scan:
Through all it brightly gleams,
E'en though in darkness and the gloom of chance
For us poor mortals wrapt.

ANTISTROPH. IV.

Safe, by no fall tripped up,
The full-wrought deed decreed by brow of Zeus;

[1] "Ionian," as soft and elegiac, in contrast with the more military character of Dorian music.

[2] In the Greek the *paronomasia* turns upon the supposed etymological connexion between θεὸς and τιθήμι. I have here, as elsewhere, attempted an analogous rather than identical *jeu de mot*.

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For dark and shadowed o'er
The pathways of the counsels of his heart,
And difficult to see.

STROPH. V.

And from high-towering hopes He hurleth down
To utter doom the heir of mortal birth;
Yet sets He in array
No forces violent;
All that God works is effortless and calm:
Seated on loftiest throne,
Thence, though we know not how,
He works His perfect will.

ANTISTROPH. V.

Ah, let him look on frail man's wanton pride,
With which the old stock burgeons out anew,
By love for me constrained,
In counsels ill and rash,
And in its frenzied, passionate resolve
Finds goad it cannot shun;
But in deceivèd hopes,
Shall know, too late, its woe.

STROPH. VI.

Such bitter griefs, lamenting, I recount,
With cries shrill, tearful, deep,
(Ah woe! ah woe!)
That strike the ear with mourner's woe-fraught cry.
Though yet alive, I wail mine obsequies;

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Thee, Apian sea-girt bluff,[1]
I greet (our alien speech
Thou knowest well, O land,)
And ofttimes fall, with rendings passionate,
On robe of linen and Sidonian veil.

ANTISTROPH. VI.

But to the Gods, for all things prospering well,
When death is kept aloof,
Gifts votive come of right.
Ah woe! Ah woe!
Oh, troubles dark, and hard to understand!
Ah, whither will these waters carry me?
Thee, Apian sea-girt bluff,
I greet (our alien speech
Thou knowest well, O land,)
And ofttimes fall, with rendings passionate,
On robe of linen and Sidonian veil.

STROPH. VII.

The oar indeed and dwelling, timber-wrought,
With sails of canvas, 'gainst the salt sea proof,
Brought me with favouring gales,
By stormy wind unvexed;
Nor have I cause for murmur. Issues good
May He the all-seeing Father grant, that I,
Great seed of Mother dread,

[1] The Greek word which I have translated "bluff" was one not familiar to Attic ears, and was believed to be of Kyrenean origin. Æschylos accordingly puts it into the lips of the daughters of Danaos, as characteristic more or less of the "alien speech" of the land from which they came.

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In time may 'scape, still maiden undefiled,
The bridegroom's marriage-bed.

ANTISTROPH. VII.

And with a will that meets my will may She,
The unstained child of Zeus, on me look down,
*Our Artemis, who guards
The consecrated walls;
And with all strength, though hunted down, uncaught,
May She, the Virgin, me a virgin free,
Great seed of Mother dread,
That I may 'scape, still maiden undefiled,
The bridegroom's marriage-bed.

STROPH. VIII.

But if this may not be,
We, of swarth sun-burnt race,
Will with our suppliant branches go to him,
Zeus, sovereign of the dead,[1]
The Lord that welcomes all that come to him,
Dying by twisted noose
If we the grace of Gods Olympian miss.
By thine ire, Zeus, 'gainst Io virulent,
The Gods' wrath seeks us out,
And I know well the woe
Comes from thy queen who reigns in heaven victorious;
For after stormy wind
The tempest needs must rage.

[1] So in v. 235 Danaos speaks of the "second Zeus" who sits as Judge in Hades. The feeling to which the Chorus gives utterance is that of—
"Flectere si nequeo superos, Acheronta movebo."

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ANTISTROPH. VIII.

And then shall Zeus to words
Unseemly be exposed,
Having the heifer's offspring put to shame
Whom He himself begat,
And now his face averting from our prayers.
Ah, may he hear on high,
Yea, pitying look and hear propitiously!
By thine ire, Zeus, 'gainst Io virulent,
The Gods' wrath seeks us out;
And I know well the woe
Comes from thy queen, who reigns in heaven victorious;
For after stormy wind
The tempest needs must rage.

Danaos. My children, we need wisdom; lo! ye came
With me, your father wise and old and true,
As guardian of your voyage. Now ashore,
With forethought true I bid you keep my words,
As in a tablet-book recording them:
I see a dust, an army's voiceless herald,
Nor are the axles silent as they turn;
And I descry a host that bear the shield,
And those that hurl the javelin, marching on
With horses and with curvèd battle-cars.
Perchance they are the princes of this land,
Come on the watch, as having news of us;
But whether one in kindly mood, or hot
With anger fierce, leads on this great array,

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It is, my children, best on all accounts
To take your stand hard by this hill of Gods
Who rule o'er conflicts.[1] Better far than towers
Are altars, yea, a shield impenetrable.
But with all speed approach the shrine of Zeus,
The God of mercy, in your left hand holding
The suppliants' boughs wool-wreathed, in solemn guise,[2]
And greet our hosts as it is meet for us,
Coming as strangers, with all duteous words
Kindly and holy, telling them your tale
Of this your flight, unstained by guilt of blood;
And with your speech, let mood not over-bold,
Nor vain nor wanton, shine from modest brow
And calm, clear eye. And be not prompt to speak,
Nor full of words; the race that dwelleth here
Of this is very jealous:[3] and be mindful
Much to concede; a fugitive thou art,
A stranger and in want, and 'tis not meet
That those in low estate high words should speak.
Chor. My father, to the prudent prudently
Thou speakest, and my task shall be to keep
Thy goodly precepts. Zeus, our sire, look on us!

1 Some mound dedicated to the Gods, with one or more altars and statues of the Gods on it, is on the stage, and the suppliants are told to take up their places there. The Gods of conflict who are named below, Zeus, Apollo, Poseidon, presided generally over the three great games of Greece. Hermes is added to the list.

2 Comp. *Libation-Pourers*, 1024, *Eumen.* 44.

3 The Argives are supposed to share the love of brevity which we commonly connect with their neighbours the Laconians.

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Dan. Yea, may He look with favourable eye!

Chor. I fain would take my seat not far from thee.

[*Chorus moves to the altar not far from* DANAOS.

Dan. Delay not then; success go with your plan.

Chor. Zeus, pity us with sorrow all but crushed!

Dan. If He be willing, all shall turn out well.

Chor. . . . . .

Dan. Invoke ye now the mighty bird of Zeus.[1]

Chor. We call the sun's bright rays to succour us.

Dan. Apollo too, the holy, in that He, 210
A God, has tasted exile from high heaven.[2]

Chor. Right well may He in this fate feel for men.

Dan. So may He feel, and look on us benignly!

Chor. Whom of the Gods shall I besides invoke?

Dan. I see this trident here, a God's great symbol.[3]

Chor. Well hath He brought us, well may He receive!

Dan. Here too is Hermes,[4] as the Hellenes know him.

[1] The "mighty bird of Zeus" seems here, from the answer of the Chorus, to mean not the "eagle" but the "sun," which roused men from their sleep, as the cock did, so that "cock-crow" and "sunrise" were synonymous. It is, in any case, striking that Zeus, rather than Apollo, appears as the Sun-God.

[2] The words refer to the myth of Apollo's banishment from heaven and servitude under Admetos.

[3] In the Acropolis at Athens the impress of a trident was seen on the rock, and was believed to commemorate the time when Poseidon had claimed it as his own by setting up his weapon there. Something of the same kind seems here to be supposed to exist at Argos, where a like legend prevailed.

[4] The Hellenic Hermes is distinguished from his Egyptian counterpart, Thoth, as being different in form and accessories.

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Chor. To us, as free, let Him good herald prove.

Dan. Yea, and the common shrine of all these Gods
Adore ye, and in holy precincts sit,
Like swarm of doves in fear of kites your kinsmen,
Foes of our blood, polluters of our race.
How can bird prey on bird and yet be pure?
And how can he be pure who seeks in marriage
Unwilling bride from father too unwilling?
Nay, not in Hades' self, shall he though dead,
Poor fool, 'scape sentence, doing deeds like this;
For there, as men relate, a second Zeus [1]
Judges men's evil deeds, and to the dead
Assigns their last great penalties. Look up,
And take your station here, that this your cause
May win its way to a victorious end.

[*Enter the* KING *on his chariot, followed by* Attendants.

King. Whence comes this crowd, this non-Hellenic band,
In robes and raiment of barbaric fashion
So gorgeously attired, whom now we speak to?
This woman's dress is not of Argive mode,
Nor from the climes of Hellas. How ye dared,
Without a herald even or protector,
Yea, and devoid of guides too, to come hither
Thus boldly, is to me most wonderful.
And yet these boughs, as is the suppliant's wont,

[1] A possible reference to the Egyptian Osiris, as lord or judge of Hades. Comp. v. 145.

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Are set by you before the Gods of conflicts.
By this alone will Hellas guess aright.
Much more indeed we might have else conjectured,
But that these present have a voice to speak.

Chor. Not false this speech of thine about our garb;
But shall I greet thee as a citizen,
Or bearing Hermes' rod, or city ruling?[1]

King. Nay, for that matter, answer thou and speak
Without alarm. Palæchthon's son am I,
The giant's, king of this Pelasgic land;
And named from me, their king,[2] as well might be.
The race Pelasgic reaps our country's fruits;
*And all the land through which the Strymon pours
Its pure, clear waters to the West I rule;
And as the limits of my realm I mark
The land of the Perrhæbi, and the climes
Near the Pæonians, on the farther side
Of Pindos, and the Dodonæan heights;[3]
And the sea's waters form its bounds. O'er all
Within these coasts I govern; and this plain,
The Apian land, itself has gained its name
Long since from one who as a healer lived;[4]

[1] "Shall I," the Chorus asks, "speak to you as a private citizen, or as a herald, or as a king?"

[2] It would appear from this that the king himself bore the name Pelasgos. In some versions of the story he is so designated.

[3] The lines contain a tradition of the wide extent of the old Pelasgic rule, including Thessalia, or the Pelasgic Argos, between the mouths of Peneus and Pindos, Perrhæbia, Dodona, and finally the Apian land or Peloponnesos.

[4] The true meaning of the word "Apian," as applied to the Peloponnesos,

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For Apis, coming from Naupactian land
That lies beyond the straits, Apollo's son,
Physician-prophet, frees this land of ours
From man-destroying monsters, which the soil,
Polluted with the guilt of blood of old,
By anger of the Gods, brought forth,—fierce plagues,
The dragon-brood's dread, unblest company;
And Apis, having for this Argive land
Duly wrought out his saving surgery,
Gained his reward, remembered in our prayers;
And thou, this witness having at my hands,
May'st tell thy race at once, and further speak;
Yet lengthened speech our city loveth not.

Chor. Full short and clear our tale. We boast that we
Are Argives in descent, the children true
Of the fair, fruitful heifer. And all this
Will I in what I speak demonstrate true.

King. Nay, strangers, what ye tell is past belief
For me to hear, that ye from Argos spring;
For ye to Libyan women are most like,[1]
And nowise to our native maidens here.
Such race might Neilos breed, and Kyprian mould,

nesos, seems to have been "distant." Here the myth is followed which represented it as connected with Apis the son of Telchin, (son of Apollo, in the sense of being a physician-prophet,) who had freed the land from monsters.

1 The description would seem to indicate—(1.) that the daughter of Danaos appeared on the stage as of swarthy complexion; and (2.) that Indians, Æthiopians, Kyprians, and Amazons, were all thought of as in this respect alike.

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Like yours, is stamped by skilled artificers
On women's features; and I hear that those
Of India travel upon camels borne,
Swift as the horse yet trained as sumpter-mules,
E'en those who as the Æthiops' neighbours dwell.
And had ye borne the bow, I should have guessed,
Undoubting, ye were of-th' Amazons' tribe,
Man-hating, flesh-devouring. Taught by you,
I might the better know how this can be,
That your descent and birth from Argos come.

Chor. They tell of one who bore the temple-keys
Of Hera, Io, in this Argive land.

King. So was 't indeed, and wide the fame prevails:
And is it said that Zeus a mortal loved?

Chor. And that embrace was not from Hera hid.

King. What end had then these strifes of sovereign Ones?

Chor. The Argive goddess made the maid a heifer.

King. Did Zeus that fair-horned heifer still approach?

Chor. So say they, fashioned like a wooing steer.

King. How acted then the mighty spouse of Zeus?

Chor. She o'er the heifer set a guard all-seeing.

King. What herdsman strange, all-watching, speak'st thou of?

Chor. Argos, the earth-born, him whom Hermes slew.

King. What else then wrought she on the ill-starred heifer?

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Chor. She sent a stinging gadfly to torment her.
[Those who near Neilos dwell an *œstros* call it.]
King. Did she then drive her from her country far?
Chor. All that thou say'st agrees well with our tale.
King. And did she to Canôbos go, and Memphis?
Chor. Zeus with his touch an offspring then begets.
King. What Zeus-born calf that heifer claims as mother?
Chor. *He from that touch which freed named Epaphos.
King. [*What offspring then did Epaphos beget?*][1]
Chor. Libya, that gains her fame from greatest land.
King. What other offspring, born of her, dost tell of?
Chor. Sire of my sire here, Belos, with two sons.
King. Tell me then now the name of yonder sage.
Chor. Danaos, whose brother boasts of fifty sons.
King. Tell me his name, too, with ungrudging speech.
Chor. Ægyptos: knowing now our ancient stock,
Take heed thou bid thine Argive suppliants rise.
King. Ye seem, indeed, to make your ancient claim
To this our country good: but how came ye
To leave your father's house? What chance constrained you?
Chor. O king of the Pelasgi, manifold
Are ills of mortals, and thou could'st not find
The self-same form of evil anywhere.

[1] The line is conjectural, but some question of this kind is implied in the answer of the Chorus.

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Who would have said that this unlooked-for flight
Would bring to Argos race once native here,
Driving them forth in hate of wedlock's couch?

King. What seek'st thou then of these the Gods of conflicts,
Holding your wool-wreathed branches newly-plucked?

Chor. That I serve not Ægyptos' sons as slave.

King. Speak'st thou of mere dislike, or breach of right?

Chor. Nay, who'd find fault with master that one loved?

King. Yet thus it is that mortals grow in strength.[1]

Chor. True; and 'tis easy to desert the wretched.

King. How then to you may I religious prove?

Chor. Yield us not up unto Ægyptos' sons.

King. Hard boon thou ask'st, to wage so strange a war.

Chor. Nay, Justice champions those who fight with her.

King. Yes, if her hand was in it from the first.

Chor. Yet reverence thou the state-ship's stern thus wreathed.[2]

King. I tremble as I see these seats thus shadowed.

[1] By sacrificing personal likings to schemes of ambition, men and women contract marriages which increase their power.

[2] The Gods of conflict are the pilots of the ship of the state. The altar dedicated to them is as its stern; the garlands and wands of suppliants which adorn it are as the decorations of the vessels.

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STROPH. I.

Chor. Dread is the wrath of Zeus, the God of suppliants:
Son of Palæchthon, hear;
Hear, O Pelasgic king, with kindly heart.
Behold me suppliant, exile, wanderer,
*Like heifer chased by wolves
Upon the lofty crags,
Where, trusting in her strength,
She lifteth up her voice
And to the shepherd tells her tale of grief.

King. I see, o'ershadowed with the new-plucked boughs,
*Bent low, a band these Gods of conflict own;
And may our dealings with these home-sprung strangers
Be without peril, nor let strife arise
To this our country from unlooked-for chance
And unprovided. This our State wants not.

ANTISTROPH. I.

Chor. Yea, may She grant our flight bring harm to none,
Justice, the suppliant's friend,
Daughter of Zeus, supreme Apportioner.
But thou, [*to the King,*] though old, from me, though younger, learn:
If thou a suppliant pity
Thou ne'er shalt penury know,

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As long as Gods receive
Within their sacred shrines
Gifts at the hands of worshipper unstained.

King. It is not at my hearth ye suppliant sit;
But if the State be as a whole defiled,
Be it the people's task to work the cure.
I cannot pledge my promise to you first
Ere I have counselled with my citizens.[1]

STROPH. II.

Chor. Thou art the State—yea, thou the commonwealth,
Chief lord whom none may judge;
'Tis thine to rule the country's altar-hearth,
With the sole vote of thine imperial nod;
And thou on throne of state,
Sole-sceptred in thy sway,
Bringest each matter to its destined end;
Shun thou blood-guiltiness.

King. Upon my foes rest that blood-guiltiness!
Yet without harm I cannot succour you,
Nor gives it pleasure to reject your prayers.
In a sore strait am I; fear fills my soul
To take the chance, to do or not to do.

ANTISTROPH. II.

Chor. Look thou on Him who looks on all from heaven,

[1] Some editors have seen in this an attempt to enlist the constitutional sympathies of an Athenian audience in favour of the Argive king, who will not act without consulting his assembly. I am disposed to think that the

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Guardian of suffering men
Who, worn with toil, unto their neighbours come
As suppliants, and receive not justice due:
For these the wrath of Zeus,
Zeus, the true suppliant's God,
Abides, by wail of sufferer unappeased.

King. Yet if Ægyptos' sons have claim on thee
By their State's law, asserting that they come
As next of kin, who dare oppose their right?
Thou must needs plead that by thy laws at home
They over thee have no authority.[1]

STROPH. III.

Chor. Ah! may I ne'er be captive to the might
Of males! Where'er the stars
Are seen in heaven, I track my way in flight,
As refuge from a marriage that I hate.
But thou, make Right thy friend,
And honour what the Gods count pure and true.

King. Hard is the judgment: choose not me as judge.
But, as I said before, I may not act

aim of the dramatist was in precisely the opposite direction, and that the words which follow set forth his admiration for the king who can act, as compared with one who is tied and hampered by restrictions.

[1] By an Attic law, analogous in principle to that of the Jews, (Num. xxxvi. 8; 1 Chron. xxiii. 22,) heiresses were absolutely bound to marry their next of kin, if he claimed his right. The king at once asserts this as the law which was *primâ facie* applicable to the case, and declares himself ready to surrender it if the petitioners can show that their own municipal law is on the other side. He will not thrust his country's customs upon foreigners, who can prove that they live under a different rule, but in the absence of evidence must act on the law which he is bound officially to recognise.

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Without the people, sovereign though I be,
Lest the crowd say, should aught fall out amiss,
" In honouring strangers, thou the State did'st ruin."

ANTISTROPH. III.

Chor. Zeus, the great God of kindred, in these things
Watches o'er both of us,
Holding an equal scale, and fitly giving
To the base evil, to the righteous blessing.
Why, when these things are set
In even balance, fear'st thou to do right?

King. Deep thought we need that brings deliverance,
That, like a diver, mine eye too may plunge
Clear-seeing to the depths, not wine-bedrenched,
That these things may be harmless to the state,
And to ourselves may issue favourably;
That neither may the strife make you its prey,
Nor that we give you up, who thus are set
Near holy seat of Gods, and so bring in
To dwell with us the Avenger terrible,
God that destroyeth, who not e'en in Hades
Gives freedom to the dead. Say, think ye not
That there is need of counsel strong to save?

STROPH. I.

Chor. Take heed to it, and be
Friend to the stranger wholly faithful found;
Desert not thou the poor,
Driven from afar by godless violence.

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ANTISTROPH. I.

See me not dragged away,
O thou that rul'st the land! from seat of Gods:
Know thou men's wanton pride,
And guard against the wrath of Zeus on high.

STROPH. II.

Endure not thou to see thy suppliant,
Despite of law, torn off,
As horses by their frontlets, from the forms
Of sculptured deities,
Nor yet the outrage of their wanton hands,
Seizing these broidered robes.

ANTISTROPH. II.

For know thou well, whichever course thou take,
Thy sons and all thy house
*Must pay in war the debt that Justice claims,
Proportionate in kind.
Lay well to heart these precepts, wise and true,
Given by great Zeus himself.

King. Well then have I thought o'er it. To this point
Our ship's course drives. Fierce war we needs must risk
Either with these (*pointing to the Gods*) or those. Set fast and firm
Is this as is the ship tight wedged in stocks;
And without trouble there 's no issue out.
For wealth indeed, were our homes spoiled of that,
There might come other, thanks to Zeus the Giver,

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More than the loss and filling up the freight;
And if men's tongue should aim its adverse darts,
Baleful and over-stimulant of wrath,
There might be words those words to heal and soothe.
But how to blot the guilt of kindred blood,
This needs a great atonement—many victims
Falling to many gods—to heal the woe.
*I, for my part, from that strife turn aside;
And I far rather would be ignorant
Than wise, forecasting evil. May the end,
Against my judgment, show itself as good!

Chor. Hear, then, the last of all our pleas for pity.

King. I hear; speak on. It shall not 'scape my heed.

Chor. Girdles I have, and zones that bind my robes.

King. Such things are fitting for a woman's state.

Chor. With these, then, know, as good and rare device . . . .

King. Nay, speak. What word is this thou 'lt utter now?

Chor. Unless thou giv'st our band thy plighted word

King. What wilt thou do with this device of girdles?

Chor. With tablets new these sculptures we 'll adorn.

King. Thou speak'st a riddle. Make thy meaning plain.

Chor. Upon these Gods we 'll hang ourselves at once.

King. I hear a word which pierces to the heart.

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Chor. Thou see'st our meaning. Eyes full clear I 've given.

King. Lo then! in many ways sore troubles come.
A host of evils rushes like a flood;
A sea of woe none traverse, fathomless,
This have I entered; haven there is none.
For if I fail to do this work for you,
Thou tellest of defilement unsurpassed;[1]
And if for thee against Ægyptos' sons,
Thy kindred, I before my city's walls
In conflict stand, how can there fail to be
A bitter loss, to stain the earth with blood
Of man for woman's sake? And yet I needs
Must fear the wrath of Zeus, the suppliant's God;
That dread is mightiest with the sons of men.
Thou, then, O aged father of these maidens!
Taking forthwith these branches in thine arms,
Lay them on other altars of the Gods
Our country worships, that the citizens
May all behold this token of thy coming,
And about me let no rash speech be dropped;
For 'tis a people prompt to blame their rulers.
And then perchance some one beholding them,
And pitying, may wax wrathful 'gainst the outrage
Of that male troop, and with more kindly will
The people look on you; for evermore

[1] *I.e.*, the pollution which the statues of the Gods would contract if they carried into execution their threat of suicide.

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Men all wish well unto the weaker side.

Dan. This boon is counted by us of great price,
To find a patron proved so merciful.
And thou, send with us guides to lead us on,
And tell us how before their shrines to find
The altars of the Gods that guard the State,
*And holy places columned round about;
And safety for us, as the town we traverse.
Not of like fashion is our features' stamp;
For Neilos rears not race like Inachos.[1]
Take heed lest rashness lead to bloodshed here;
Ere now, unknowing, men have slain their friends.

King (*to Attendants*). Go then, my men; full well the stranger speaks;
And lead him where the city's altars stand,
The seats of Gods; and see ye talk not much
To passers-by as ye this traveller lead,
A suppliant at the altar-hearth of Gods.

[*Exeunt* DANAOS *and Attendants.*

Chor. Thou speak'st to him; and may he go as bidden!
But what shall I do? What hope giv'st thou me?

King. Leave here those boughs, the token of your grief.

Chor. Lo! here I leave them at thy beck and word.

King. Now turn thy steps towards this open lawn.

[1] Inachos, the river-God of Argos, and as such contrasted with Neilos.

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Chor. What shelter gives a lawn unconsecrate?[1]

King. We will not yield thee up to birds of prey.

Chor. Nay, but to foes far worse than fiercest dragons.

King. Good words should come from those who good have heard.

Chor. No wonder they wax hot whom fear enthrals.

King. But dread is still for rulers all unmeet.

Chor. Do thou then cheer our soul by words and deeds.

King. Nay, no long time thy sire will leave thee lorn;

And I, all people of the land convening,
Will the great mass persuade to kindly words;
And I will teach thy father what to say.
Wherefore remain and ask our country's Gods,
With suppliant prayers, to grant thy soul's desire,
And I will go in furtherance of thy wish:
Sweet Suasion follow us, and Fortune good! [*Exit.*

STROPH. I.

Chor. O King of kings! and blest
Above all blessed ones,
And Power most mighty of the mightiest!
O Zeus, of high estate!
Hear thou and grant our prayer!
Drive thou far off the wantonness of men,

[1] *i.e.*, "Unconsecrate," marked out by no barriers, accessible to all, and therefore seeming to offer but little prospect of a safe asylum. The place described seems to have been an open piece of turf rather than a grove of trees.

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The pride thou hatest sore,
And in the pool of darkling purple hue
Plunge thou the woe that comes in swarthy barque.

ANTISTROPH. I.

Look on the women's cause;
Recall the ancient tale,
Of one whom Thou did'st love in time of old,
The mother of our race:
Remember it, O Thou
Who did'st on Io lay thy mystic touch.
We boast that we are come
Of consecrated land the habitants,
And from this land by lineage high descended.

STROPH. II.

Now to the ancient track,
Our mother's, I have passed,
The flowery meadow land where she was watched,—
The pastures of the herd,
Whence Io, by the stinging gadfly driven,
Flees, of her sense bereft,
Passing through many tribes of mortal men;
And then by Fate's decree
Crossing the billowy straits,
On either side she leaves a continent.[1]

ANTISTROPH. II.

Now through the Asian land
She hastens o'er and o'er,

[1] Comp. the narrative as given in *Prometheus Bound*, vv. 660, *et seq.*

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Right through the Phrygian fields where feed the flocks;
And passes Teuthras' fort,
Owned by the Mysians,[1] and the Lydian plains;
And o'er Kilikian hills,
And those of far Pamphylia rushing on,
By ever-flowing streams,
On to the deep, rich lands,
And Aphrodite's home in wheat o'erflowing.[2]

STROPH. III.

And so she cometh, as that herdsman winged
Pierces with sharpest sting,
To holy plain all forms of life sustaining,
Fields that are fed from snows,[3]
Which Typhon's monstrous strength has traversèd,[4]
And unto Neilos' streams,
By sickly taint untouched,[5]
Still maddened with her toil of ignominy,
By torturing stings driven on, great Hera's frenzied slave.

1 Teuthras' fort, or Teuthrania, is described by Strabo (xii. p. 571) as lying between the Hellespont and Mount Sipylos, in Magnesia.

2 Kypros, as dedicated to the worship of Aphrodite, and famous for its wine, and oil, and corn.

3 The question, what caused the mysterious exceptional inundations of the Nile, occupied, as we see from Herodotos, (ii. c. 19-27,) the minds of the Greeks. Of the four theories which the historian discusses, Æschylos adopts that which referred it to the melting of the snows on the mountains of central Africa.

4 Typhon, the mythical embodiment of the power of evil, was fabled to have wandered over Egypt, seeking the body of Osiris. Isis, to baffle him, placed coffins in all parts of Egypt, all empty but the one which contained the body.

5 The fame of the Nile for the purity of its water, after the earthy matter held in solution had been deposited, seems to have been as great in the earliest periods of its history as it is now.

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ANTISTROPH. III.

And those who then the lands inhabited
Quivered with pallid fear,
That filled their soul at that unwonted marvel,
Seeing that monstrous shape,
The human joined with brute,
Half heifer, and half form of woman fair:[1]
And sore amazed were they.
Who was it then that soothed
Poor Io, wandering in her sore affright,
Driven on, and ever on, by gadfly's maddening sting?

STROPH. IV.

Zeus, Lord of endless time
[Was seen All-working then]
He, even He, for by his sovereign might
That works no ill, was she from evil freed;
And by his breath divine
She findeth rest, and weeps in floods of tears
Her sorrowing shame away;
And with new burden big,
Not falsely 'heaven-sent' named,
She bare a son that grew in faultless growth,

ANTISTROPH. IV.

Prosperous through long, long years;
And so the whole land shouts with one accord,

[1] Io was represented as a woman with a heifer's head, and was probably a symbolic representation of the moon, with her crescent horns. Sometimes the transformation is described (as in v. 294) in words which imply a more thorough change.

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"Lo, a race sprung from him, the Lord of life,
In very deed, Zeus-born!
Who else had checked the plagues that Hera sent?"
This is the work of Zeus:
And speaking of our race
That sprang from Epaphos
As such, thou would'st not fail to hit the mark.

STROPH V.

Which of the Gods could I with right invoke
As doing juster deeds?
He is our Father, author of our life,
The King whose right hand worketh all his will,
Our line's great Author, in his counsels deep
Recording things of old,
Directing all his plans, the great work-master, Zeus,

ANTISTROPH. V.

For not as subject hastening at the beck
Of strength above his own,[1]
Reigns He subordinate to mightier powers;
Nor does He pay his homage from below,
While One sits throned in majesty above;[2]
Act is for him as speech,
To hasten what his teeming mind resolves.

[1] Perhaps— "For not as subject sitting 'neath the sway
Of strength above his own."

[2] The passage takes its place among the noblest utterances of a faith passing above the popular polytheism to the thought of one sovereign Will ruling and guiding all things, as Will,—without effort, in the calmness of a power irresistible.

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Re-enter DANAOS.

Dan. Be of good cheer, my children. All goes well
With those who dwell here, and the people's voice
Hath passed decrees full, firm, irrevocable.

Chor. Hail, aged sire, that tell'st me right good news!
But say with what intent the vote hath passed,
And on which side the people's hands prevail.

Dan. The Argives have decreed without division,
So that my aged mind grew young again;
For in full congress, with their right hands raised
Rustled the air as they decreed their vote
That we should sojourn in their land as free,
Free from arrest, and with asylum-rights;
And that no native here nor foreigner
Should lead us off; and, should he venture force,
That every citizen who gave not help
Dishonoured should be driven to exile forth.
Such counsel giving, the Pelasgian King
Gained their consent, proclaiming that great wrath
Of Zeus the God of suppliants ne'er would let
The city wax in fatness,—warning them
That double guilt [1] upon the State would come,
Touching at once both guests and citizens,

[1] Double, as involving a sin against the laws of hospitality, so far as the suppliants were strangers—a sin against the laws of kindred, so far as they might claim by descent the rights of citizenship.

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The food and sustenance of sore disease
That none could heal. And then the Argive host,
Hearing these things, decreed by show of hands,
Not waiting for the herald's proclamation,
So it should be. They heard, indeed, the crowd
Of those Pelasgi, all the winning speech,
The well-turned phrases cunning to persuade;
But it was Zeus that brought the end to pass.

Chor. Come then, come, let us speak for Argives
Prayers that are good for good deeds done; 630
Zeus, who o'er all strangers watches,
May He see with his praise and favour
The praise that comes from the lips of strangers,
*And guide in all to a faultless issue.

STROPH. I.

Half-Chor. A. Now, now, at last, ye Gods of Zeus begotten,[1]
Hear, as I pour my prayers upon their race,
That ne'er may this Pelasgic city raise
From out its flames the joyless cry of War,
War, that in other fields
Reapeth his human crop:
For they have mercy shown,
And passed their kind decree, 630
Pitying this piteous flock, the suppliants of great Zeus.

1 If, as has been conjectured, the tragedy was written with a view to the alliance between Argos and Athens, made in B.C. 461, this choral ode must have been the centre, if not of the dramatic, at all events of the political interest of the play.

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ANTISTROPH. I.

They did not take their stand with men 'gainst women,
Casting dishonour on their plea for help,
*But looked to Him who sees and works from heaven,
*Full hard to war with. Yea, what house could bear
To see Him on its roof
Casting pollution there?[1]
Sore vexing there He sits.
Yes, they their kin revere,
Suppliants of holiest Zeus;
Therefore with altars pure shall they the Gods delight.

STROPH. II.

Therefore from faces by our boughs o'ershadowed[2]
Let prayers ascend in emulous eagerness:
Ne'er may dark pestilence
This state of men bereave;
May no fierce party-strife
Pollute these plains with native carcases;
And may the bloom of youth
Be with them still uncropt;
And ne'er may Aphrodite's paramour,
Ares the scourge of men,
Mow down their blossoms fair!

ANTISTROPH. II.

And let the altars tended by the old

[1] The image is that of a bird of evil omen, perched upon the roof, and defiling the house, while it uttered its boding cries.

[2] The suppliants' boughs, so held as to shade the face from view.

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*Blaze with the gifts of men with hoary hairs;
So may the State live on
In full prosperity.
Let them great Zeus adore,
The strangers' God, the One supreme on high,
Who by time-honoured law
Orders the course of fate.
And next we pray that ever more and more,
Earth may her tribute bear,
And Artemis as Hecate preside[1]
O'er woman's travail-pangs. 660

STROPH. III.

Let no destroying strife come on, invading
This city to lay waste,
Setting in fierce array
War with its fruit of tears,
Lyreless and danceless all,
And cry of people's wrath;
And may the swarm of plagues,
Loathly and foul to see,
Abide far off from these our citizens,
And that Lykeian king, may He be found
Benignant to our youth![2]

[1] The name of Hecate connected Artemis as on the one side with the unseen world of Hades, so, on the other, with child-birth, and the purifications that followed on it.

[2] The name Lykeian, originally, perhaps, simply representing Apollo as the God of Light, came afterwards to be associated with the might of destruction (the Wolf-destroyer) and the darts of pestilence and sudden death. The prayer is therefore that he, the Destroyer, may hearken to the suppliants, and spare the people for whom they pray.

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ANTISTROPH. III.

And Zeus, may He by his supreme decree
Make the earth yield her fruits
Through all the seasons round,
And grant a plenteous brood
Of herds that roam the fields!
May Heaven all good gifts pour,
And may the voice of song
Ascend o'er altar shrines,
Unmarred by sounds of ill!
And let the voice that loves with lyre to blend
Go forth from lips of blameless holiness,
In accents of great joy!

STROPH. IV.

*And may the rule in which the people share
Keep the State's functions as in perfect peace,
E'en that which sways the crowd,
*Which sways the commonwealth
By counsels wise and good;
And to the strangers and the sojourners
May they grant rights that rest on compacts sure,
Ere War is roused to arms,
So that no trouble come!

ANTISTROPH. IV.

And the great Gods who o'er this country watch,
May they adore them in the land They guard,
With rites of sacrifice
And troops with laurel boughs

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As did our sires of old!
For thus to honour those who gave us life,
This stands as one of three great laws on high,[1]
Written as fixed and firm,
The laws of Right revered.

Dan. I praise these seemly prayers, dear children mine,
But fear ye not, if I your father speak
Words that are new and all unlooked-for by you;
For from this station to the suppliant given
I see the ship; too clear to be mistaken
The swelling sails, the bulwark's coverings,
And prow with eyes that scan the onward way,[2]
But too obedient to the steerman's helm,
Being, as it is, unfriendly. And the men
Who sail in her with swarthy limbs are seen
In raiment white conspicuous. And I see
Full clear the other ships that come to help;
And this, as leader, putting in to shore,
Furling its sails, is rowed with equal stroke.
'Tis yours, with mood of calm and stedfast soul,
To face the fact, and not to slight the Gods.
And I will come with friends and advocates;
For herald, it may be, or embassy,

[1] The "three great laws" were those ascribed to Triptolemos, "to honour parents, to worship the Gods with the fruits of the earth, to hurt neither man nor beast."

[2] The Egyptian ships, like those of many other Eastern countries, had eyes (the eyes of Osiris, as they were called) painted on their bows.

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May come, and wish to seize and bear you off,
Grasping their prey. But nought of this shall be;
Fear ye not them. It were well done, however,
If we should linger in our help, this succour
In no wise to forget. Take courage then;
In their own time and at the appointed day,
Whoever slights the Gods shall pay for it.

STROPH. I.

Chor. I fear, my father, since the swift-winged ships
Are come, and very short the time that 's left.
A shuddering anguish makes me sore afraid,
Lest small the profit of my wandering flight.
I faint, my sire, for fear.

Dan. My children, since the Argives' vote is passed,
Take courage; they will fight for thee, I know.

ANTISTROPH. I.

Chor. Hateful and wanton are Ægyptos' sons,
Insatiable of conflict, and I speak
To one who knows them. They in timbered ships,
Dark-eyed, have sailed in wrath that hits its mark,
With great and swarthy host.

Dan. Yet many they shall find whose arms are tanned
In the full scorching of the noontide heat.[1]

[1] A side-thrust, directed by the poet, who had fought at Marathon, against the growing effeminacy of the Athenian youth, many of whom were learning to shrink from all activity and exposure that might spoil their complexions. Comp. Plato, *Phædros*, p. 239.

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STROPH. II.

Chor. Leave me not here alone, I pray thee, father!
Alone, a woman is as nought, and war
Is not for her. Of over-subtle mind,
And subtle counsel in their souls impure,
Like ravens e'en for altars caring not,—
Such in their souls are they.

Dan. That would work well indeed for us, my children,
Should they be foes to Gods as unto thee.

ANTISTROPH. II.

Chor. No reverence for these tridents or the shrines
Of Gods, my father, will restrain their hands:
Full stout of heart, of godless mood unblest,
Fed to the full, and petulant as dogs,
And for the voice of high Gods caring not,—
Such, such in soul are they.

Dan. Nay, the tale runs that wolves prevail o'er dogs;
And byblos fruit excels not ear of corn.[1]

Chor. But since their minds are as the minds of brutes,
Restless and vain, we must beware of force.

[1] The saying is somewhat dark, but the meaning seems to be that if the "dogs" of Egypt are strong, the "wolves" of Argos are stronger; that the wheat on which the Hellenes lived gave greater strength to limbs and sinew than the "byblos fruit" on which the Egyptian soldiers and sailors habitually lived. Some writers, however, have seen in the last line, rendered—

"The byblos fruit not always bears full ear,"

a proverb like the English,

"There 's many a slip
'Twixt the cup and the lip."

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Dan. Not rapid is the getting under weigh
Of naval squadron, nor their anchoring,
Nor the safe putting into shore with cables.
Nor have the shepherds of swift ships quick trust
In anchor-fastenings, most of all, as now,
When coming to a country havenless ;
And when the sun has yielded to the night,
That night brings travails to a pilot wise,
[Though it be calm and all the waves sleep still ;]
So neither can this army disembark
Before the ship is safe in anchorage.
And thou, beware lest in thy panic fear
Thou slight the Gods whom thou hast called to help.
The city will not blame your messenger,
Old though he be, being young in clear-voiced thought.
[*Exit.*

STROPH. I.

Chor. Ah, me ! thou land of jutting promontory
Which justly all revere,
What lies before us ? Where in Apian land
Shall we a refuge find,
If still there be dark hiding anywhere ?
Ah ! that I were as smoke
That riseth full and black
Nigh to the clouds of Zeus,
Or soaring up on high invisible,
Like dust that vanishes,
Pass out of being with no help from wings !

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ANTISTROPH. I.

*E'en so the ill admits not now of flight;
My heart in dark gloom throbs,
My father's work as watcher brings me low;
I faint for very fear,
And I would fain find noose that bringeth death,
In twisted cordage hung,
Before the man I loathe
Draws near this flesh of mine:
Sooner than that may Hades rule o'er me
Sleeping the sleep of death!

STROPH. II.

Ah, might I find a place in yon high vault,
Where the rain-clouds are passing into snow,
Or lonely precipice
Whose summit none can see,
Rock where the vulture haunts,
Witness for me of my abysmal fall,
Before the marriage that will pierce my heart
Becomes my dreaded doom!

ANTISTROPH. II.

I shrink not from the thought of being the prey
Of dogs and birds that haunt the country round;
For death shall make me free
From ills all lamentable:
Yea, let death rather come
Than the worse doom of hated marriage-bed!

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What other refuge now remains for me
That marriage to avert?

STROPH. III.

Yea, to the Gods raise thou
Cloud-piercing, wailing cry
Of songs and litanies,
Prevailing, working freedom out for me:
And thou, O Father, look,
Look down upon the strife,
With glance of wrath against our enemies
From eyes that see the right;
With pity look on us thy suppliants,
O Lord of Earth, O Zeus omnipotent!

ANTISTROPH. III.

For lo! Ægyptos' house,
In pride intolerable,
O'er-masculine in mood,
Pursuing me in many a winding course,
Poor wandering fugitive,
With loud and wild desires,
Seek in their frenzied violence to seize:
But thine is evermore
The force that turns the balance of the scale:
What comes to mortal men apart from Thee?

Ah! ah! ah! ah!
*Here on the land behold the ravisher
Who came on us by sea!

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*Ah, may'st thou perish, ravisher, ere thou
Hast stopped or landed here!
*I utter cry of wailing loud and long,
*I see them work the prelude of their crimes,
Their crimes of violence.
Ah! ah! Ah me!
Haste in your flight for help!
The mighty ones are waxing fat and proud,
By sea and land alike intolerable.
Be thou, O king, our bulwark and defence!

Enter Herald *of the sons of* ÆGYPTOS, *advancing to the daughters of* DANAOS.

Her. Haste, haste with all your speed unto the barque.
Chor. Tearing of hair, yea, tearing now will come,
And print of nails in flesh,
And smiting off of heads,
With murderous stream of blood.
Her. Haste, haste ye, to that barque that yonder lies,
Ye wretches, curse on you.

STROPH. I.

Chor. Would thou had'st met thy death
Where the salt waves wildly surge,
Thou with thy lordly pride,
In nail-compacted ship:
*Lo! they will smite thee, weltering in thy blood,
*And drive thee to thy barque.
Her. I bid you cease perforce, the cravings wild

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Of mind to madness given.
Ho there! what ho! I say;
Give up those seats, and hasten to the ship:
I reverence not what this State honoureth.

ANTISTROPH. I.

Chor. Ah, may I ne'er again
Behold the stream where graze the goodly kine,
Nourished and fed by which [1]
The blood of cattle waxes strong and full!
*As with a native's right,
*And one of old descent,
I keep, old man, my seat, my seat, I say.
Her. Nay, in a ship, a ship thou soon shalt go,
With or without thy will,
By force, I say, by force:
Come, come, provoke not evils terrible,
Falling by these my hands.

STROPH. II.

Chor. Ah me! ah me!
Would thou may'st perish with no hand to help,
Crossing the sea's wide plain,
In wanderings far and wide,
Where Sarpedonian sand-bank [2] spreads its length,
Driven by the sweeping blasts!

[1] The words recall the vision of the "seven well-favoured kine and fat-fleshed," which "came out of the river," as Pharaoh dreamed (Gen. xli. 1, 2) and which were associated so closely with the fertility which it ordinarily produced through the whole extent of the valley of the Nile.

[2] Two dangerous low headlands seem to have been known by this name, one on the coast of Kilikia, the other on that of the Thrakian Chersonese.

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Her. Sob thou, and howl, and call upon the Gods : 850
Thou shalt not 'scape that barque from Ægypt come,
Though thou should'st pour a bitterer strain of grief.

ANTISTROPH. II.

Chor. Woe ! woe ! Ah woe ! ah woe,
For this foul wrong ! Thou utterest fearful things ;
*Thou art too bold and insolent of speech.
*May mighty Nile that reared thee turn away
Thy wanton pride and lust,
That we behold it not !

Her. I bid you go to yon ship double-prowed,[1]
With all your speed. Let no one lag behind ;
But little shall my grasp your ringlets spare. 860

[*Seizes on the leader of the Suppliants.*

STROPH. III.

Chor. Ah me ! my father, ah !
The help of holiest statues turns to woe ;
He leads me to the sea,
With motion spider-like,
Or like a dream, a dark and dismal dream.
Ah woe ! ah woe ! ah woe !
O mother Earth ! O Earth ! O mother mine !
Avert that cry of fear.
O Zeus, thou king ! O son of mother Earth !

Her. Nay, I fear not the Gods they worship here ;
They did not rear nor lead me up to age. 870

[1] No traces of ships of this structure are found in Egyptian art ; but, if the reading be right, it implies the existence of boats of some kind, so built that they could be steered from either end.

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ANTISTROPH. III.

Chor. Near me he rages now,

. . . .

That biped snake,
And like a viper bites me by the foot.
Oh, woe is me! woe! woe!
O mother Earth! O Earth! O mother mine!
Avert that cry of fear.
O Zeus, thou king! O son of mother Earth.

Her. If some one yield not, and to yon ship go,
The hand that tears her tunic will not pity.

STROPH. IV.

Chor. Ho! rulers of the state! 880
Ye princes! I am seized.

Her. It seems, since ye are slow to hear my words,
That I shall have to drag you by the hair.

ANTISTROPH. IV.

Chor. We are undone, undone!
We suffer, prince, unlooked-for outrages.

Her. Full many princes, heirs of great Ægyptos,
Ye soon shall see. Take courage; ye shall have
No cause to speak of anarchy as there.

Enter KING *followed by his* Bodyguard.

King. Ho there! What dost thou? and with what intent
Dost thou so outrage this Pelasgic land?
Dost think thou comest to a town of women? 890

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Too haughty thou, a stranger 'gainst Hellenes,
And, sinning much, hast nothing done aright.

Her. What sin against the right have I then done?

King. First, thou know'st not how stranger-guest should act.

Her. How so? When I, but finding what I lost . .

King. Whom among us dost thou then patrons call?

Her. Hermes the Searcher, chiefest patron mine.[1]

King. Thou, Gods invoking, honourest not the Gods.

Her. The Gods of Neilos are the Gods I worship.

King. Ours then are nought, if I thy meaning catch.

Her. These girls I 'll lead, if no one rescues them.

King. Lay hand on them, and soon thou 'lt pay the cost.

Her. I hear a word in no wise hospitable.

King. Who rob the Gods I welcome not as guests.

Her. I then will tell Ægyptos' children this.

King. This threat is all unheeded in my mind.

Her. But that I, knowing all, may speak it plain,
(For it is meet a herald should declare
Each matter clearly,) what am I to say?
By whom have I been robbed of that fair band
Of women whom I claim as kindred? Nay,

[1] Hermes, the guardian deity of heralds, is here described by the epithet which marked him out as being also the patron of detectives. Every stranger arriving in a Greek port had to place himself under a *proxenos* or patron of some kind. The herald, having no *proxenos* among the citizens, appeals to his patron deity.

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But it is Ares that shall try this cause;
And not with witnesses, nor money down,
Settling the matter, but there first must fall
Full many a soldier, and of many a life
The rending in convulsive agony.

King. Why should I tell my name? In time thou 'lt know it,
Thou and thy fellow-travellers. But these maidens,
With their consent and free choice of their wills,
Thou may'st lead off, if godly speech persuade them:
But this decree our city's men have made
With one consent, that we to force yield not
This company of women. Here the nail
Is driven tight home to keep its place full firm;[1]
These things are written not on tablets only,
[Nor signed and sealed in folds of byblos-rolls;]
Thou hear'st them clearly from a tongue that speaks
With full, free speech. Away, away, I say:
And with all speed from out my presence haste.

Her. It is thy will then a rash war to wage:
May strength and victory on our males attend!

[*Exit.*

King Nay, thou shalt find the dwellers of this land
Are also males, and drink not draughts of ale

[1] The words refer to the custom of nailing decrees, proclamations, treaties, and the like, engraved on metal or marble, upon the walls of temples or public buildings. Traces of the same idea may possibly be found in the promise to Eliakim that he shall be "as a nail in a sure place," (Isa. xxii. 23;) in the thanksgiving of Ezra that God had given His people "a nail in his holy place," (Ezra ix. 8.)

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From barley brewed.[1] [*To the Suppliants.*] But ye,
and your attendants,
Take courage, go within the fencèd city,
Shut in behind its bulwark deep of towers;
Yea, many houses to the State belong,
And I a palace own not meanly built,
If ye prefer to live with many others
In ease and plenty: or if that suits better,
Ye may inhabit separate abodes.
Of these two offers that which pleases best
Choose for yourselves, and I as your protector,
And all our townsmen, will defend the pledge
Which our decree has given you. Why wait'st thou
For any better authorised than these?

Chor. For these thy good deeds done may'st thou in
good,
All good, abound, great chief of the Pelasgi!
But kindly send to us
Our father Danaos, brave and true of heart,
To counsel and direct.
His must the first decision be where we
Should dwell, and where to find
A kindly home; for ready is each one
To speak his word of blame 'gainst foreigners.
But may all good be ours!
And so with fair repute and speech of men,

[1] As before, the bread of the Hellenes was praised to the disparagement of the "byblos fruit" of Egypt, so here their wine to that of the Egyptian beer, which was the ordinary drink of the lower classes.

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Free from all taint of wrath,
So place yourselves, dear handmaids, in the land,
As Danaos hath for each of us assigned
Dowry of handmaid slaves.

Enter DANAOS *followed by* Soldiers.

Dan. My children, to the Argives ye should pray,
And sacrifice, and full libations pour,
As to Olympian Gods, for they have proved,
Beyond all doubt, deliverers: and they heard
*All that I did towards those cousins there,
*Those lovers hot and bitter. And they gave
To me as followers these that bear the spear,
That I might have my meed of honour due,
And might not die by an assassin's hand
A death unlooked-for, and thus leave the land
A weight of guilt perpetual: and 'tis fit
That one who meets such kindness should return,
*From his heart's depths, a nobler gratitude;
And add ye this to all already written,
Your father's many maxims of true wisdom,
That we, though strangers, may in time be known;
For as to aliens each man's tongue is apt
For evil, and spreads slander thoughtlessly;
But ye, I charge you, see ye shame me not,
With this your life's bloom drawing all men's eyes.
The goodly vintage is full hard to watch,
And men and beasts make fearful havoc of it,

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Nay, birds that fly, and creeping things of earth;
And Kypris offers fruitage, dropping ripe,
*As prey to wandering lust, nor lets it stay;[1]
And on the goodly comeliness of maidens
Each passer-by, o'ercome with hot desire,
Darts forth the amorous arrows of the eye.
And therefore let us suffer nought of this,
Through which our ship has ploughed such width of sea,
Such width of trouble; neither let us work
Shame to ourselves, and pleasure to our foes.
This two-fold choice of home is open to you:
[Pelasgos offers his, the city theirs,]
To dwell rent-free. Full easy terms are these:
Only, I charge you, keep your father's precepts,
Prizing as more than life your chastity.

Chor. May the high Gods that on Olympos dwell
Bless us in all things; but for this our vintage
Be of good cheer, my father; for unless
The counsels of the Gods work strange device,
I will not leave my spirit's former path.

STROPH. I.

Semi-Chor. A. Go then and make ye glad the high Gods, blessed for ever,
Those who rule our towns, and those who watch over our city,

[1] The words present a striking parallelism to the erotic imagery of the *Song of Solomon*: "Take us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil our vines, for our vines have tender grapes," (ii. 15.)

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And they who dwell by the stream of Erasinos ancient.[1]

Semi-Chor. B. And ye, companions true,
Take up your strain of song.
Let praise attend this city of Pelasgos;
Let us no more adore the mouths of Neilos
With these our hymns of praise;

ANTISTROPH. I.

Semi-Chor. A. Nay, but the rivers here that pour
calm streams through our country,[2]
Parents of many a son, making glad the soil of our
meadows,
With wide flood rolling on, in full and abounding rich-
ness.

Semi-Chor. B. And Artemis the chaste,
May she behold our band
With pity; ne'er be marriage rites enforcèd
On us by Kythereia: those who hate us,
Let that ill prize be theirs.

STROPH. II.

Semi-Chor. A. Not that our kindly strain does slight
to Kypris immortal;
For she, together with Hera, as nearest to Zeus is
mighty,

[1] The Erasinos was supposed to rise in Arcadia, in Mount Stymphalos, to disappear below the earth, and to come to sight again in Argolis.

[2] In this final choral ode of the *Suppliants*, as in that of the *Seven against Thebes*, we have the phænomenon of the division of the chorus, hitherto united, into two sections of divergent thought and purpose. Semi-Chorus A. remains stedfast in its purpose of perpetual virginity; Semi-Chorus B. relents, and is ready to accept wedlock.

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A goddess of subtle thoughts, she is honoured in mysteries solemn.

Semi-Chor. B. Yea, as associates too with that their mother belovèd,

Are fair Desire and Suasion,[1] whose pleading no man can gainsay,

Yea, to sweet Concord too Aphrodite's power is entrusted,

*And the whispering paths of the Loves.

ANTISTROPH. II.

Semi-Chor. A. Yet am I sore afraid of the ship that chases us wanderers,

Of terrible sorrows, and wars that are bloody and hateful;

*Why else have they had fair gale for this their eager pursuing?

Semi-Chor. B. Whate'er is decreed for us, I know that it needs must happen,

The mighty purpose of Zeus, unfailing, admits no transgression:

*May this fate come to us, as to many women before us,

*Fate of marriage and spouse!

[1] The two names were closely connected in the local worship of Athens. the temples of Aphrodite and Peitho (Suasion) standing at the south-west angle of the Acropolis. If any special purpose is to be traced in the invocation, we may see it in the poet's desire to bring out the nobler, more ethical side of Aphrodite's attributes, in contrast with the growing tendency to look on her as simply the patroness of brutal lust.

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STROPH. III.

Semi-Chor. A. Ah! may great Zeus avert
From me all marriage with Ægyptos' sons!

Semi-Chor. B. Nay, all will work for good.

Semi-Chor. A. Thou glozest that which will no glozing bear.

Semi-Chor. B. And thou know'st not what future comes to us.

ANTISTROPH. III.

Semi-Chor. A. How can I read the mind
Of mightiest Zeus to sight all fathomless?

Semi-Chor. B. Well-tempered be thy speech!

Semi-Chor. A. What mood of calmness wilt thou school me in?

Semi-Chor. B. Be not o'er-rash in what concerns the Gods.

STROPH. IV.

Semi-Chor. A. Nay, may our great king Zeus avert that marriage
With husbands whom we hate,
E'en He who, touching her with healing hand,
Freed Io from her pain,
Putting an end to all her wanderings,
Working with kindly force.

ANTISTROPH. IV.

Semi-Chor. B. And may He give the victory to women!
I choose the better part,

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Though mixed with ill; and that the trial end
Justly, as I have prayed,
By means of subtle counsels which God gives
To liberate from ills.[1]

[1] The play, as acted, formed part of a trilogy, and the next play, the *Danaids*, probably contained the sequel of the story, the acceptance by the Suppliants of the sons of Ægyptos in marriage, the plot of Danaos for the destruction of the bridegrooms on the wedding-night, and the execution of the deed of blood by all but Hypermnestra.

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FRAGMENTS.

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FRAGMENTS.

38.

APHRODITE *loquitur.*

The pure, bright heaven still yearns to blend with earth,
And earth is filled with love for marriage-rites,
And from the kindly sky the rain-shower falls
And fertilises earth, and earth for men
Yields grass for sheep, and corn, Demêter's gift;
And from its wedlock with the South the fruit
Is ripened in its season; and of this,
All this, I am the cause accessory.

123.

So, in the Libyan fables, it is told
That once an eagle, stricken with a dart,
Said, when he saw the fashion of the shaft,
"With our own feathers, not by others' hands,
Are we now smitten."

147.

Of all the Gods, Death only craves not gifts:
Nor sacrifice, nor yet drink-offering poured

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Avails; no altars hath he, nor is soothed
By hymns of praise. From him alone of all
The powers of Heaven Persuasion holds aloof.

151.

When 'tis God's will to bring an utter doom
Upon a house, He first in mortal men
Implants what works it out.

162.

The words of Truth are ever simplest found.

163.

What good is found in life that still brings pain?

174.

To many mortals silence great gain brings.

229.

O Death the Healer, scorn thou not, I pray,
To come to me: of cureless ills thou art
The one physician. Pain lays not its touch
Upon a corpse.

230.

When the wind
Nor suffers us to leave the port, nor stay.

243.

And if thou wish to benefit the dead,
'Tis all as one as if thou injured'st them,
And they nor sorrow nor delight can feel:
Yet higher than we are is Nemesis,
And Justice taketh vengeance for the dead.

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266.

THETIS *on the death of Achilles.*

Life free from sickness, and of many years,
And in a word a fortune like to theirs
Whom the Gods love, all this He spake to me
As pæan-hymn, and made my heart full glad,
And I full fondly trusted Phœbos' lips
As holy and from falsehood free, of art
Oracular an ever-flowing spring.
And He who sang this, He who at the feast
Being present, spake these things,—yes, He it is
That slew my son.

267.

The man who does ill, ill must suffer too.

268.

Evil on mortals comes full swift of foot,
And guilt on him who doth the right transgress.

269.

Thou see'st a vengeance voiceless and unseen
For one who sleeps or walks or sits at ease:
It takes its course obliquely, here to-day
And there to-morrow. Nor does night conceal
Men's deeds of ill, but whatsoe'er thou dost,
Think that some God beholds it.

270.

"All have their chance:" good proverb for the rich.

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271.

Wise is the man who knows what profiteth,
Not he who knoweth much.

272.

Full grievous burden is a prosperous fool.

272A.

From a just fraud God turneth not away.

273.

There is a time when God doth falsehood prize.

274.

The polished brass is mirror of the form,
Wine of the soul.

275.

Words are the parents of a causeless wrath.

276.

Men credit gain for oaths, not oaths for them.

277.

God ever works with those that work with will.

278.

Wisdom to learn is e'en for old men good.

281.

The base who prosper are intolerable.

282.

The seed of mortals broods o'er passing things,
And hath nought surer than the smoke-cloud's shadow.

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283.

Old age hath stronger sense of right than youth.

286.

Yet though a man gets many wounds in breast,
He dieth not, unless the appointed time,
The limit of his life's span, coincide;
Nor does the man who by the hearth at home
Sits still, escape the doom that Fate decrees.

287.

How far from just the hate men bear to death,
Which comes as safeguard against many ills.

288.

To FORTUNE.

Thou did'st beget me; thou too, as it seems,
Wilt now destroy me.

289.

The fire-moth's silly death is that I fear.

290.

I by experience know the race full well
That dwells in Æthiop land, where seven-mouthed Nile
Rolls o'er the land with winds that bring the rain,
What time the fiery sun upon the earth
Pours its hot rays, and melts the snow till then
Hard as the rocks; and all the fertile soil
Of Egypt, filled with that pure-flowing stream,
Brings forth Demêter's ears that feed our life.

291.

This hoopoo, witness of its own dire ills,

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He hath in varied garb set forth, and shows
In full array that bold bird of the rocks
Which, when the spring first comes, unfurls a wing
Like that of white-plumed kite; for on one breast
It shows two forms, its own and eke its child's,
And when the corn grows gold, in autumn's prime,
A dappled plumage all its forms will clothe;
And ever in its hate of these 't will go
Far off to lonely thickets or bare rocks.

292.

Still to the sufferer comes, as due from God,
A glory that to suffering owes its birth.

293.

The air is Zeus, Zeus earth, and Zeus the heaven,
Zeus all that is, and what transcends them all.

297.

Take courage; pain's extremity soon ends.

298.

When Strength and Justice are true yoke-fellows,
Where can be found a mightier pair than they?

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APPENDIX OF RHYMED CHORUSES.

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AGAMEMNON.

VERSES 40-248.

NINE weary years are gone and spent
Since Menelaos' armament
Sped forth, on work of vengeance bent,
For Priam's guilty land;
And with him Agamemnon there
Throne, sceptre, army all did share;
And so from Zeus the Atreidæ bear,
Their two-fold high command.
They a fleet of thousand sail,
Strong in battle to prevail,
Led from out our Argive coast,
Shouting war-cries to the host;
E'en as vultures do that utter
Shrillest screams as round they flutter,
Grieving for their nestlings lost,
Plying still their oary wings
In their lonely wanderings,

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Having lost the sweet unrest
That bound them to their young ones' nest.
And One on high of solemn state,
Apollo, Pan, or Zeus the great,
When he hears that shrill wild cry
Of his clients in the sky,
On them, the godless who offend,
Erinnys slow and sure doth send.
So 'gainst Alexandros then
The sons of Atreus, chiefs of men,
Zeus sent to work his high behest,
True guardian of the host and guest.
He, for bride of many a groom,
On Danai, Troïans sendeth doom,
Many wrestlings, sinew-trying
Of the knee in dust down-lying,
Many a spear-shaft snapt asunder
In the prelude of war's thunder.
What shall be, shall, and still we see
Fulfilled is destiny's decree;
Nor by tears in secret shed,
Nor by offerings o'er the dead,
Will he soothe God's vengeful ire
For altar hearths despoiled of fire.

And we with age outworn and spent
Are left behind that armament,
With head upon our staff low bent.

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Weak our strength like that of boy;
Youth's life-blood, in its bounding joy,
For deeds of might is like to age,
And knows not yet war's heritage:
And the man whom many a year
Hath bowed in withered age and sere,
As with three feet creepeth on,
Not stronger than his infant son,
Like phantom form of day-dream gone.

And now, O Queen, who tak'st thy name
From Tyndareus of ancient fame,
Our Clytæmnestra whom we own
As rightly sharing Argos' throne!
What tidings joyous hast thou heard,
Token true or flattering word,
That thou send'st to every shrine
Solemn pomp in stately line;
Shrines of Gods who reign in light,
Or those who dwell in central night,
Who in Heaven for aye abide,
Or o'er the Agora preside.
Lo, thy gifts on altars blaze,
And here and there through heaven's wide ways
The torches fling their fiery rays,
Fed by soft and suasive spell
Of the clear oil, flowing well
From the royal treasure-cell.

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Telling what of this thou may,
All that 's meet to us to say,
Do thou our haunting cares allay,
Cares which now bring sore distress,
While now bright hope, with power to bless,
From out the sacrifice appears,
And wardeth off our restless fears,
The boding sense of coming fate,
That makes the spirit desolate.

STROPH. I.

Yes, it is mine to tell
What omens to our leaders then befell,
Giving new strength for war,
(For still though travelled far
In life, by God's great gift to us belong
The suasive powers of song,)
To tell how those who bear
O'er all Achæans sway in equal share,
Ruling in one accord
The youth of Hellas that own each as lord,
Were sent with mighty host
By mighty birds against the Troïan coast,
Kings of the air to kings of men appearing
Near to the palace, on the right hand veering;
On spot seen far and near,
They with their talons tear
A pregnant hare with all her unborn young,
All her life's course in death's deep darkness flung.

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Oh raise the bitter cry, the bitter wail;
Yet pray that good prevail!

ANTISTROPH. I.

And then the host's wise seer
Stood gazing on the Atreidæ standing near,
Of diverse mood, and knew
Those who the poor hare slew,
And those who led the host with shield and spear,
And spake his omens clear:
"One day this host shall go,
And Priam's city in the dust lay low,
And all the kine and sheep
Countless, which they before their high towers keep,
Fate shall with might destroy:
Only take heed that no curse mar your joy,
Nor blunt the edge of curb that Troïa waiteth,
Smitten too soon, for Artemis still hateth
The winged hounds that own
Her father on his throne,
Who slay the mother with the young unborn,
And looks upon the eagle's feast with scorn.
Ah! raise the bitter cry, the bitter wail;
Yet pray that good prevail.

EPODE.

For she, the Fair One, though her mercy shields
The lion's whelps, like dew-drops newly shed,
And yeanling young of beasts that roam the fields,
Yet prays her sire fulfil these omens dread,

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The good, yet evil too.
And now I call on him, our healer true,
Lest she upon the Danai send delays
That keep our ships through many weary days,
Urging a new strange rite,
Unblest alike by man and God's high law,
Evil close clinging, working sore despite,
Marring a wife's true awe.
For still there lies in wait,
Fearful and ever new,
Watching the hour its eager thirst to sate,
Vengeance on those who helpless infants slew.
Such things, ill mixed with good, great Calchas spake,
As destined by the birds' strange auguries;
And we too now our echoing answer make
In loud and woeful cries:
Oh raise the bitter cry, the bitter wail;
Yet pray that good prevail.

STROPH. II.

O Zeus, whoe'er Thou be,
If that name please Thee well,
By that I call on Thee;
For weighing all things else I fail to tell
Of any name but Zeus;
If once for all I seek
Of all my haunting, troubled thoughts a truce,
That name I still must speak.

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ANTISTROPH. II.

For He who once was great,
Full of the might to war,
Hath lost his high estate;
And He who followed now is driven afar,
Meeting his Master too:
But if one humbly pay
With 'bated breath to Zeus his honour due,
He walks in wisdom's way,—

STROPH. III.

To Zeus, who men in wisdom's path doth train,
Who to our mortal race
Hath given the fixèd law that pain is gain;
For still through his high grace
True counsel falleth on the heart like dew,
In deep sleep of the night,
The boding thoughts that out of ill deeds grew;
This too They work who sit enthronèd in their might.

ANTISTROPH. III.

And then the elder leader of great fame
Who ruled the Achæans' ships,
Not bold enough a holy seer to blame
With words from reckless lips,
But tempered to the fate that on him fell;—
And when the host was vexed
With tarryings long, scant stores, and surging swell,
Chalkis still far off seen, and baffled hopes perplexed;

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STROPH. IV.

And stormy blasts that down from Strymon sweep,
And breed sore famine with the long delay,
Hurl forth our men upon the homeless deep
On many a wandering way ;
Sparing nor ships, nor ropes, nor sailing gear,
Doubling the weary months, and vexing still
The Argive host with fear.
Then when as mightier charm for that dread ill,
Hard for our ships to bear,
From the seer's lips did " Artemis " resound,
The Atreidæ smote their staves upon the ground,
And with no power to check, shed many a bitter tear.

ANTISTROPH. IV.

And then the elder of the chiefs thus cried :
" Hard fate it is the Gods to disobey ;
Hard fate if I my child, my home's fond pride,
With my own hands must slay,
Polluting with the streams of maiden's blood
A father's hands, the holy altar near.
Which course hath least of good ?
How can I loss of ships and comrades bear ?
Right well may men desire,
With craving strong, the blood of maiden pure,
As charm to lull the winds and calm ensure ;
Ah, may there come the good to which our hopes aspire ! "

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STROPH. V.

Then, when he his spirit proud
To the yoke of doom had bowed,
While the blasts of altered mood
O'er his soul swept like a flood,
Reckless, godless and unblest;
Thence new thoughts upon him pressed,
Thoughts of evil, frenzied daring,
(Still doth passion, base guile sharing,
Mother of all evil, hold
The power to make men bad and bold,)
And he brought himself to slay
His daughter, as on solemn day,
Victim slain the ships to save,
When for false wife fought the brave.

ANTISTROPH. V.

All her cries and loud acclaim,
Calling on her father's name,—
All her beauty fresh and fair,
They heeded not in their despair,
Their eager lust for conflict there.
And her sire the attendants bade
To lift her, when the prayer was said,
Above the altar like a kid,
Her face and form in thick veil hid;
Yea, with ruthless heart and bold,
O'er her gracious lips to hold

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Their watch, and with the gag's dumb pain
From evil-boding words restrain.

STROPH. VI.

And then upon the ground
Pouring the golden streams of saffron veil,
She cast a glance around
That told its piteous tale,
At each of those who stood prepared to slay,
Fair as the form by skilful artist drawn,
And wishing, all in vain, her thoughts to say;
For oft of old in maiden youth's first dawn,
Within her father's hall,
Her voice to song did call,
To chant the praises of her sire's high state,
His fame, thrice blest of Heaven, to celebrate.

ANTISTROPH. VI.

What then ensued mine eyes
Saw not, nor may I tell, but not in vain
The arts of Calchas wise;
For justice sends again,
The lesson "pain is gain" for them to learn:
But for our piteous fate since help is none,
With voice that bids "Good-bye," we from it turn
Ere yet it come, and this is all as one
With weeping ere the hour,
For soon will come in power
To-morrow's dawn, and good luck with it come!
So speaks the guardian of this Apian home.

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VERSES 346–471.

O great and sovran Zeus, O Night,
Great in glory, great in might,
Who round Troïa's towers hast set,
Enclosing all, thy close-meshed net,
So that neither small nor great
Can o'erleap the bond-slave's fate,
Or woe that maketh desolate;
Zeus, the God of host and guest,
Worker of all this confessed,
He by me shall still be blest.
Long since, 'gainst Alexandros He
Took aim with bow that none may flee,
That so his arrows onward driven,
Nor miss their mark, nor pierce the heaven.

STROPH. I.

Yes, they lie smitten low,
If so one dare to speak, by stroke of Zeus;
Well one may trace the blow;
The doom that He decreed their soul subdues.
And though there be that say
The Gods for mortal men care not at all,
Though they with reckless feet tread holiest way,
These none will godly call.
Now is it to the children's children clear
Of those who, overbold,
More than was meet, breathed Discord's spirit drear;
While yet their houses all rich store did hold

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Beyond the perfect mean.
Ah! may my lot be free from all that harms,
My soul may nothing wean
From calm contentment with her tranquil charms;
For nought is there in wealth
That serves as bulwark 'gainst the subtle stealth
Of Destiny and Doom,
For one who, in the pride of wanton mood,
Spurns the great altar of the Right and Good.

ANTISTROPH. I.

Yea, a strange impulse wild
Urges him on, resistless in its might,
Atê's far-scheming child.
It knows no healing, is not hid in night,
That mischief lurid, dark;
Like bronze that will not stand the test of wear,
A tarnished blackness in its hue we mark;
And like a boy who doth a bird pursue
Swift-floating on the wing,
He to his country hopeless woe doth bring;
And no God hears their prayer,
But sendeth down the unrighteous to despair,
Whose hands are stained with sin.
So was it Paris came
His entrance to the Atreidæ's home to win,
And brought its queen to shame,
To shame that brand indelible hath set
Upon the board where host and guest were met.

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STROPH. II.

And leaving to her countrymen to bear
Wild whirl of ships of war and shield and spear,
And bringing as her dower,
Death's doom to Ilion's tower,
She hath passed quickly through the palace gate,
Daring what none should dare;
And lo! the minstrel seers bewail the fate
That home must henceforth bear;
"Woe for the kingly house and for its lord;
Woe for the marriage-bed and paths which still
A vanished love doth fill!
There stands he, wronged, yet speaking not a word
Of scorn from wrathful will,
Seeing with utter woe that he is left
Of her fair form bereft;
And in his yearning love
For her who now is far beyond the sea,
A phantom queen through all the house shall rove;
And all the joy doth flee
The sculptured forms of beauty once did give;
And in the penury of eyes that live,
All Aphroditè's grace
Is vanished into space.

ANTISTROPH. II.

And spectral forms in visions of the night
Come, bringing sorrow with their vain delight:

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For vain it is when one
Thinks that great joy is near,
And, passing through his hands, the dream is gone
On gliding wings, that bear
The vision far away on paths of sleep."
Such woes were felt at home
Upon the sacred altar of the hearth,
And worse than these remain for those who roam
From Hellas' parent earth:
In every house, in number measureless,
Is seen a sore distress:
Yea, sorrows pierce the heart:
For those who from his home he saw depart
Each knoweth all too well;
And now, instead of warrior's living frame,
There cometh to the home where each did dwell
The scanty ashes, relics of the flame,
The urns of bronze that keep
The dust of those that sleep.

STROPH. III.

For Ares, who from bodies of the slain
Reapeth a golden gain,
And holdeth, like a trafficker, his scales,
E'en where the torrent rush of war prevails,
From Ilion homeward sends
But little dust, yet burden sore for friends,
O'er which, smooth-lying in the brazen urn,
They sadly weep and mourn,

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Now for this man as foremost in the strife,
And now for that who in the battle fell,
Slain for another's wife.
And muttered curses some in secret tell,
And jealous discontent
Against the Atreidæ who as champions led
The mighty armament;
And some around the wall, the goodly dead,
Have there in alien land their monument,
And in the soil of foes
Take in the sleep of death their last repose.

ANTISTROPH. III.

And lo! the murmurs which our country fill
Are as a solemn curse,
And boding anxious fear expecteth still
To hear of evil worse.
Not blind the Gods, but giving fullest heed
To those who cause a nation's wounds to bleed;
And the dark-robed Erinnyes in due time
By adverse chance and change
Plunge him who prospers though defiled by crime,
In deepest gloom, and through its formless range
No gleams of help appear.
O'er-vaunted glory is a perilous thing;
For on it Zeus, whose glance fills all with fear,
His thunderbolts doth fling.
That fortune fair I praise

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That rouseth not the Gods to jealousy.
May I ne'er tread the devastator's ways,
Nor as a prisoner see
My life wear out in drear captivity!

EPODE.

And now at bidding of the courier-flame,
Herald of great good news,
A murmur swift through all the city came;
But whether it with truth its course pursues,
Who knows? or whether God who dwells on high,
With it hath sent a lie?
Who is so childish, or of sense bereft,
As first to feel the glow
That message of the herald fire has left,
And then to sink down low,
Because the rumour changes in its sound?
It is a woman's mood
To accept a boon before the truth is found:
Too quickly she believes in tidings good,
And so the line exact
That marks the truth of fact
Is over-passed, and with quick doom of death
A glory spread by woman perisheth.

VERSES 665–782.

STROPH. I.

Who was it named her with such foresight clear?
Could it be One of might,

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In strange prevision of her work of fear,
Guiding the tongue aright?
Who gave that war-wed, strife-upstirring one
The name of Helen, ominous of ill?
For 'twas through her that Hellas was undone,
That woes from Hell men, ships, and cities fill.
Out from the curtains, gorgeous in their fold,
Wafted by breeze of Zephyr, earth's strong child,
She her swift way doth hold;
And hosts of mighty men, as hunters bold
That bear the spear and shield,
Wait on the track of those who steered their way
Unseen where Simois flows by leafy field,
Urged by a strife that came with power to slay.

ANTISTROPH. I.

And so the wrath which doth its work fulfil
To Ilion brought, well-named,
A marriage marring all, avenging still
For friendship wronged and shamed,
And outrage foul on Zeus, of host and guest
The guardian God, from those who then did raise
The bridal hymn of marriage-feast unblest
Which called the bridegroom's kin to shouts of praise.
But now by woe oppressed
Priam's ancient city waileth very sore,
And calls on Paris unto dark doom wed,
Suffering yet more and more
For all the blood of heroes vainly shed,

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And bearing through the long protracted years
A life of wailing grief and bitter tears.

STROPH. II.

One was there who did rear
A lion's whelp within his home to dwell,
A monster waking fear,
Weaned from the mother's milk it loved so well:
Then in life's dawning light,
Loved by the children, petted by the old,
Oft in his arms clasped tight,
As one an infant newly-born would hold,
With eye that gleamed beneath the fondling hand,
And fawning as at hunger's strong command.

ANTISTROPH. II.

But soon of age full grown,
It showed the inbred nature of its sire,
And wrought unasked, alone,
A feast to be that fostering nurture's hire;
Gorged full with slaughtered sheep,
The house was stained with blood as with a curse
No slaves away could keep,
A murderous mischief waxing worse and worse,
Sent as from God a priest from Atè fell,
And reared within the man's own house to dwell.

STROPH. III.

So I would say to Ilion then there came
Mood as of calm when every wind is still,
The gentle pride and joy of noble fame,
The eye's soft glance that all the soul doth thrill;

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Love's full-blown flower that brings
The thorn that wounds and stings;
And yet she turned aside,
And of the marriage feast wrought bitter end,
Coming to dwell where Priam's sons abide,
Ill sojourner, ill friend,
Sent by great Zeus the God of host and guest,
A true Erinnys by all wives unblest.

ANTISTROPH. III

There lives a saying framed of ancient days,
And in men's minds imprinted firm and fast,
That great good fortune never childless stays,
But brings forth issue,—that on fame at last
There rushes on apace
Great woe for all the race;
But I, apart, alone,
Hold a far other and a worthier creed:
The impious act is by ill issue known,
Most like the parent deed;
While still for all who love the Truth and Right,
Good fortune prospers, fairer and more bright.

STROPH. IV.

But wanton Outrage done in days of old
Another wanton Outrage still doth bear,
And mocks at human woes with scorn o'erbold,
Or soon or late as they their fortune share.
That other in its turn
Begets Satiety,

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And lawless Might that doth all hindrance spurn,
And sacred right defy,
Two Atès fell within their dwelling-place,
Like to their parent race.

ANTISTROPH. IV.

Yet Justice still shines bright in dwellings murk
And dim with smoke, and honours calm content;
But gold-bespangled homes, where guilt doth lurk,
She leaves with glance in horror backward bent,
And draws with reverent fear
To places holier far,
And little recks the praise the prosperous hear,
Whose glories tarnished are;
But still towards its destined goal she brings
The whole wide course of things.

Say then, son of Atreus, thou
Who com'st as Troia's conqueror now,
What form of welcome right and meet,
What homage thy approach to greet,
Shall I now use in measure true,
Nor more nor less than that is due?
Many men there are, I wis,
Who in seeming place their bliss,
Caring less for that which is.
If one suffers, then their wail
Loudly doth the ear assail;

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Yet have they nor lot nor part
In the grief that stirs the heart.
So too the joyous men will greet
With smileless faces counterfeit:
But shepherd who his own sheep knows
Will scan the lips that fawn and gloze,
Ready still to praise and bless
With weak and watery kindliness.
Thou when thou the host did'st guide
For Helen—truth I will not hide—
In mine eyes had'st features grim,
Such as unskilled art doth limn,
Not guiding well the helm of thought,
And giving souls with grief o'erwrought
False courage from fresh victims brought.
But with nought of surface zeal,
Now full glad of heart I feel,
And hail thy acts as deeds well done:
Thou too in time shalt know each one,
And learn who wrongly, who aright
In house or city dwells in might.

VERSES 947–1001.

STROPH. I.

Why thus continually
Do ever haunting phantoms hover nigh
My heart that bodeth ill?
Why doth the prophet's strain unbidden still,

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Unbought, flow on and on?
Why on my mind's dear throne
Hath faith lost all her former power to fling
That terror from me as an idle thing?
Yet since the ropes were fastened in the sand
That moored the ships to land,
When the great naval host to Ilion went,
Time hath passed on to feeble age and spent.

ANTISTROPH. I.

And now as face to face,
Myself reporting to myself, I trace
Their safe return; and yet
My mind, taught by itself, cannot forget
Erinnys' dolorous cry,
That lyreless melody,
And hath no strength of wonted confidence.
Not vain these pulses of the inward sense,
As my heart beateth in its wild unrest,
Within true-boding breast;
And hoping against hope, I yet will pray
My fears may all prove false and pass away.

STROPH. II.

Of high o'erflowing health
There is no limit found that satisfies;
For soon by force or stealth,
As foe 'gainst whom but one poor wall doth rise,

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Disease upon it presses, and the lot
Of fair good fortune onward moves until
It strikes on unseen reef where help is not.
But should fear move their will
For safety of their freight,
With measured sling a part they sacrifice,
And so avert their fate,
Lest the whole house should sink no more to rise,
O'erwhelmed with misery;
Nor does the good ship perish utterly!
So too abundant gift,
From Zeus in double plenty, from the earth,
Doth the worn soul from anxious care uplift,
And turns the famished wail to bounding joy and mirth.

ANTISTROPH. II.

But blood that once is shed
In purple stream of death upon the ground,
Who then, when life is fled,
A charm to call it back again hath found?
Else against him who raised the dead to life
Zeus had not sternly warred, as warning given
To all men; but if Fate were not at strife
With fate that brings from Heaven
Help from the Gods, my heart,
Out-stripping speech, had given thought free vent.
But now in gloom apart
It sits and moans in sullen discontent,

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And hath no hope that e'er
It shall an issue seasonably fair
From out the tangled skein
Of life's strange course unravel straight and clear,
While in the fever of continuing pain
My soul doth burden sore of troublous anguish bear.

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THE LIBATION-POURERS.

VERSES 20–75.

STROPH. I.

Lo, from the palace door,
We wend our way to pour
Gifts on the dead;
And in our bitter woe,
Our hands with many a blow
Smite breast and head.
On each fair cheek the nail
Has ploughed full many a trail,
And all to tatters torn
The garments we have worn;
The foldings of the vest
O'er maiden's swelling breast
Are roughly rent;
For now on us the chance
That shuts out joy and dance
Our fate hath sent;

ANTISTROPH. I.

A spectral vision clear
Thrills every hair with fear.

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Prophet our home doth keep,
In dreams of haunted sleep,
Breathing of dire distress
In the deep hid recess,
Breaking with cry of fright
The still deep hush of night;
All through the queenly bower
Sharp cry was heard that hour,
And they to whom 'twas given
To read decrees of Heaven,
In dream o'ertrue,
By solemn pledges bound,
Declared that underground
The dead were wrathful found
'Gainst those that slew.

STROPH. II.

And so the godless queen
In eager haste is seen,—
Sends me with gifts like this,
Full graceless grace, I wis,
As if, (O mother Earth,
To whom we owe our birth!)
To banish dread.
And I would fain delay
This prayer of mine to pray:
What ransom can men pay
For blood once shed?

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Oh, hearth and home of woe !
Oh, utter overthrow !
Foul mists brood o'er our halls ;
No ray of sunlight falls ;
Thick darkness from the tomb
Of heroes makes the gloom
Yet more intense.

ANTISTROPH. II.

And awe that once we knew,
Strong, mighty to subdue,
Falling on every ear,
Thrilling each soul with fear,
Is gone far hence.
There be that well may bow
In craven terror now,
For lo ! Success enthroned
As more than God is owned.
But Vengeance will not fail
Ere long to turn the scale.
On some her strokes alight,
While yet their day is bright ;
Some, as in twilight's gloom,
O'erflow with gathering doom ;
Some endless night doth hold
In realm of darkness old.

STROPH. III.

And for the blood which Earth,
To whom it owed its birth,

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Hath drunk, there still doth wait
A stern avenging Fate:
The stain of blood doth stay,
And will not pass away,
And nerves are thrilled with pain
In soul that sets in train
The plague that works amain
Its evil great.

ANTISTROPH. III.

All help from him hath fled
Who with adulterous tread
Defiles another's bed.
Though many streams should pour
Their waters o'er and o'er,
Those waters evermore
Are poured in vain;
They cannot wash away
The guilt that yet will stay,
Blood's crimson stain.

EPODE.

But since to me by Heaven
The exile's life is given
(Yea, far from home I know
The bond-slave's cup of woe)
I needs must yield assent
To good or ill intent,

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Accepting their commands
Who rule with sceptred hands.
Yea, I must hide my hate
In this my evil fate,
And under strong control
Keep my rebellious soul,
And now beneath my veil
I weep my woes' full tale;
For cares that vex and fret
My cheeks with tears are wet.

VERSES 576–639.

STROPH. I.

Many dread forms of woe and fear the Earth
Doth breed; and Ocean's deep
Is full of foes men hate, of monstrous birth;
And Air's high pathways keep
Their flashing meteors; birds that wing their flight,
And things on earth that creep,
And one might tell the wrath of whirlwind's might,
When tempests wildly sweep.

ANTISTROPH. I.

But who can tell man's purpose overbold?
Or woman's, prompt to dare?
Or the strong loves that men in bondage hold,
And bring woe everywhere?
Or strange conjunctions of the hearth and home?
But still the palm they bear,

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The loves unloved that women overcome,
And hold dominion there.

STROPH. II.

And one whose thoughts are not o'erswift of wing,
May learn and ponder well
What purpose Thestios' child to act did bring,
Purpose most dire and fell,
Her burning thought who did her own child slay,
Kindling the torch of death
That with her child's life kept its equal way,
Since coming from his mother's womb he cried,
To that predestined day on which at last he died.

ANTISTROPH. II.

And yet another must I in my song
Devote to hate and scorn,
The murderess Skylla, who to deeds of wrong
By Minos' gifts was borne,
And for her foes' sake slew a man she loved
For Cretan chains gold-wrought;
She with dog's heart the deathless lock removed
From him, in deep sleep sunk; yet Hermes' power
She too was taught at last at her appointed hour.

STROPH. III.

But since I tell my tale of loathly crime,
And of ill-omened marriage out of time,
Wedlock our house abhors,

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The schemes and plots of women steeped in guile
Against a warrior chief, a chief erewhile
The dread of foes in wars,
The foremost place I give to altar-hearth
Where no wrath burns and woman knows the worth
Of mood from daring free.

ANTISTROPH. III.

Yet of all ills the Lemnian first may stand,
The cry of loathing rings through all the land,
And still each crime of dread
A man will liken to the Lemnian ill,
And now by woe that comes from God's stern will
The race is gone and fled,
Of all men scorned, for no man looks with love
On deeds that to the high Gods hateful prove;
Is not this clear to see?

STROPH. IV.

And lo! the sword sharp-pointed pierces deep,
E'en to the heart, the sword which Vengeance wields;
The lawless deed will not neglected sleep,
When men tread down what fear of high heaven shields;

ANTISTROPH. IV.

But still the block of Vengeance firm doth stand,
And Fate, as swordsmith, hammers blow on blow;
And then with thoughts that none can understand,
Erinnys comes far known, though working slow,

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And to the old house brings the youthful heir,
That deeds of blood wrought out of olden time
May the due judgment bear
For each polluting crime.

VERSES 769–820.

STROPH. I.

Oh, hear me, hear my prayer, thou mighty Lord!
Sire of all Gods that on Olympos dwell,
Hear Thou, and grant my longing heart's desire,
That those who wise of heart would fain do well
May see each prayer for right
Fulfilled in holiest might;
That prayer, O Zeus, I pray.

STROPH. II.

Do Thou protect him, yea, O Zeus, and bring
Before his foes on yonder secret way;
For if thou raise him high, then Thou, O king,
Shalt to thy heart's content
Receive a twofold, threefold recompense,
For that thine anger bent
Against each old offence.

ANTISTROPH. I.

Look on the son of one whom Thou did'st love,
Like orphan colt fast bound to car of woes;
Set Thou a mark that may as limit prove;
Ah, might one watch his footsteps as he goes,

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In measured course and true,
This his own country through!

STROPH. III.

And ye who in our home
Stand in the shrine with plenteous wealth full stored,
Hear, O ye Gods, and come,
Yea, come with one accord,
Lead him on, wash away
With vengeance new the blood of crime of old;
Let not the old guilt stay
To breed fresh offspring where our home we hold.

MESODE.

But grant him good success,
O Thou who dost within the great cave dwell!
With upward glance of joy our chief's house bless,
And that he too, full well,
Freely and brightly with the dear, loved eyes,
May look from out the veil of cloudy skies.

ANTISTROPH. III.

And then may Maia's son
Assist him, as is meet, in this his task!
Through Him success is won,
The boon that now we ask:
And many secret things will He make clear,
If that should be his will,
But should He choose the truth should not appear,
Before men's eyes He still

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Brings darkness and the blackness of the night,
Nor is He clearer in the day's full light.

STROPH. IV.

And then will we pour forth
All that our house contains of costliest worth,
Past evil to redeem,
And through the city we will raise the strain
Shrill-voiced of women's chant yet once again.
All this as good I deem ;
This, this my gain increaseth more and more,
And far from those I love is sorrow's bitter stour.

ANTISTROPH. II.

But thou, take courage when the time is come,
The time to act indeed,
And when she calls thee "child," do thou strike home,
And let thy father's name for vengeance plead ;
Do thy dread taskwork to the uttermost.

ANTISTROPH. IV.

Let Perseus' heart within thy bosom dwell,
For thou dost work for each dear kindred ghost,
And those on high, a bitter boon and fell,
Completing there within
The deed of blood and sin,
And utterly destroying him whose hand
That crime of murder planned.

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EUMENIDES.

Verses 297–374.

Come then, and let us dance in solemn strain ;
It is our will to chant our harsh refrain,
And tell how this our band
Works among men the tasks we take in hand.
In righteous vengeance find we full delight ;
On him who putteth forth clean hands and pure
No wrath from us doth light ;
Unhurt shall he through all his life endure ;
But whoso, as this man, hath evil wrought,
And hides hands stained with blood,
On him we come, with power prevailing fraught,
True witnesses and good,
For those whom he has slain, and bent to win
Full forfeit-price for that his deed of sin.

Stroph. I.

O Mother, Mother Night !
Who did'st bear me a penalty and curse
To those who see and those who see not light,
Hear thou ; for Leto's son, in mood perverse,
Puts me to foulest shame,
In that he robs me of my trembling prey,

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The victim whom we claim,
That we his mother's blood may wash away ;
And over him as slain
Sing we this dolorous, frenzied, maddening strain,
The song that we the Erinnyes love so well,
That binds the soul as with enchanter's spell,
Without one note from out the sweet-voiced lyre,
Withering the strength of men as with a blast of fire.

ANTISTROPH. I.

For this our task hath Fate
Spun without fail to last for ever sure,
That we on man weighed down with deeds of hate
Should follow till the earth his life immure.
Nor when he dies can he
Boast of being truly free ;
And over him as slain
Sing we this dolorous, frenzied, maddening strain,
The song that we the Erinnyes love so well,
That binds the soul as with enchanter's spell,
Without one note from out the sweet-voiced lyre,
Withering the strength of men as with a blast of fire.

STROPH. II.

Yea, at our birth this lot to us was given,
And from the immortal Ones who dwell in Heaven
We still must hold aloof ;
None sits with us at banquets of delight,
Or shares a common roof,
Nor part nor lot have I in garments white ;

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My choice was made a race to overthrow,
When murder, home-reared, lays a loved one low;
Strong though he be, upon his track we tread,
And drain his blood till all his strength is fled.

ANTISTROPH. II.

Yea, 'tis our work to set another free
From tasks like this, and by my service due
To give the Gods their perfect liberty,
Relieved from task of meting judgment true;
For this our tribe from out his fellowship
Zeus hath cast out as worthy of all hate,
And from our limbs the purple blood-drops drip;
So with a mighty leap and grievous weight
My foot I bring upon my quivering prey,
With power to make the swift and strong give way,
An evil and intolerable fate.

STROPH. III.

And all the glory and the pride of men,
Though high exalted in the light of day;
Wither and fade away,
Of little honour then,
When in the darkness of the grave they stay,
By our attack brought low,
The loathèd dance through which in raiment black we go:

ANTISTROPH. III.

And through the ill that leaves him dazed and blind,

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He still is all unconscious that he falls,
So thick a cloud enthrals
The vision of his mind :
And Rumour with a voice of wailing calls,
And tells of gathering gloom
That doth the ancient halls in darkness thick entomb.

STROPH. IV.

So it abideth still ;
Ready and prompt are we to work our will,
The dreaded Ones who bring
The dire remembrance of each deed of ill,
Whom mortals may not soothe with offering,
Working a task with little honour fraught,
Yea, all dishonoured, task the Gods detest,
In sunless midnight wrought,
By which alike are pressed
Those who yet live, and those who lie in gloom unblest.

ANTISTROPH. IV.

What mortal man then will not crouch in fear,
As he my work shall hear,
The task to me by destiny from Heaven
As from the high Gods given ?
Yea, a time-honoured lot is mine I trow,
No shame in it I see,
Though deep beneath the earth my station be,
In gloom that never feels the sunlight's quickening glow

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VERSES 468–535.

STROPH. I.

Now is there utter fall and overthrow,
Which new-made laws begin;
If he who struck the matricidal blow,
His right,—not so, his utter wrong shall win,
This baseness will the minds of all men lead
To wanton, reckless thought,
And now for parents waits there woe, and deed
Of parricidal guilt by children wrought.

ANTISTROPH. I.

For then no more shall wrath from this our band,
The Mænad troop that watch the deeds of men,
Come for these crimes; but lo! on either hand
I will let slip all evil fate, and then
Telling his neighbours' grief,
Shall this man seek from that, and seek in vain,
Remission and relief,
Nor is there any certain cure for pain.
And lo! the wretched man all fruitlessly
For grace and help shall cry.

STROPH. II.

Henceforth let no man in his anguish call,
When he sore-smitten by ill-chance shall fall,
Uttering with groan and moan,
"O mighty Justice, O Erinnyes' throne!"
So may a father or a mother wail,
Struck by new woe, and tell their sorrow's tale;

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For low on earth doth lie
The home where Justice once her dwelling had on high.

ANTISTROPH. II.

Yes, there are times when reverent Awe should stay
As guardian of the soul;
It profits much to learn through suffering
The bliss of self-control.
Who that within the heart's full daylight bears
No touch of holy awe,
Be it or man or State that casts out fear,
Will still own reverence for the might of law?

STROPH. III.

Nor life that will no sovran rule obey,
Nor one down-crushed beneath a despot's sway,
Shalt thou approve;
God still gives power and strength for victory
To all that in the golden mean doth lie.
All else, as they in diverse order move,
He scans with watchful eye.
With this I speak a word in harmony,
That of irreverence still
Outrage is offspring ill,
While from the soul's true health
Comes the much-loved, much-prayed-for joy and wealth.

ANTISTROPH. III.

Yes, this I bid thee know;
Bow thou before the altar of the Right,

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And let no wandering glance
That looks at gain askance
Lead thee with godless foot to scorn or slight.
Know well the appointed penalty shall come;
The doom remaineth sure and will at last strike home.
Wherefore let each man pay the reverence due
To those who call him son;
By each to thronging guests let honour true
In loyal faith be done.

STROPH. IV.

But one who with no pressure of constraint
Of his free will draws back from evil taint,
He shall not be unblest,
Nor ever sink by utter woe oppressed.
But this I still aver,
That he whose daring leads him to transgress,
The chaos wild of evil deeds to stir,
In sharp and sore distress,
Against his will will slacken sail ere long,
When, as his timbers crash before the blast,
He feels the tempest strong.

ANTISTROPH. IV.

Then in the midst of peril he at last
Shall call on those who then will hear him not.
Yea, God still laughs to scorn
The man by evil tide of passions borne,
Swayed by thoughts wild and hot,

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When he beholdeth one whose boast was high
He ne'er should know it, sunk in misery,
And all unable round the point to steer;
  And so his former pride of prosperous days
He wrecks upon the reefs of Vengeance drear,
  And dies with none to weep him or to praise.

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